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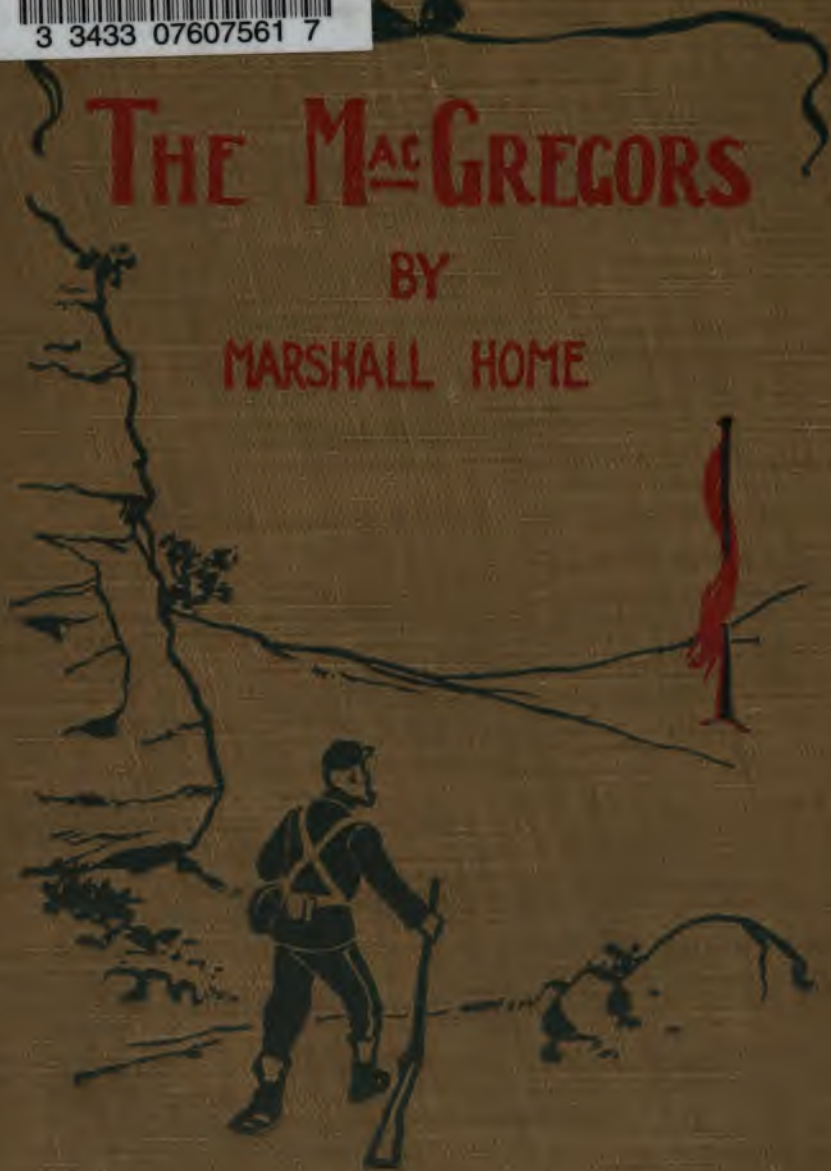


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# THE MACGREGORS

BY

MARSHALL HOME



### A New Book.

In this day and age, when the field of literature is crowded with new authors, it is impossible to keep up with all the new books. But recently one has appeared which will be of special interest to Missourians, because it is a Missouri story, and to the people of Springfield, because many of its incidents cluster about this city.

"The MacGregors," written by Mrs. Virginia Yates McCanne, of Moberly, Mo., is a story of Missouri during the civil war. It is a charming narrative and the reader becomes more and more interested as he follows the characters, drawn true to life, through the most crucial period of our history. The scenes are mostly laid within the southwestern section of the state, and the author has spared no pains in securing accurate knowledge of locations as well as events. Indeed, one critic suggests that "The MacGregors" might well be used as a guide book for Southwest Missouri.

Faith MacGregor and Frank Truman are the principal characters, and their little romance holds the interest of the reader to the end. Yet the real merit of the work centers in the true history which the author has given of the exciting scenes that were enacted within the borders of Missouri forty years ago.

"The MacGregors" has received many favorable press notices, and it is gratifying to see a Missouri author thus widely recognized.—Springfield, (Mo.) Leader-Democrat.

"The MacGregors," by Marshall Home, is an interesting story of Missouri in the war. The father of the author came to Missouri from Virginia in 1821. He was a cousin of Henry Yates, who settled in Illinois, and was the father of Dick Yates, the war governor, and grandfather of the present governor of Illinois. The motive of the story is to present a true picture of "old Missouri" during the days of the civil war, when the men of the state were di-

vided against one another. The "MacGregor" was the father of a charming Southern family, two of his sons going into the army at the call for troops. Faith MacGregor and Frank Truman are the most interesting characters from the standpoint of romance, their pretty little love story evolving itself most entertainingly, but the true interest of the story centers in the incidents connected with the war. Noble, generous and loyal, as they understand the word, are the Missourians who are represented. They are real people, who do things, and in them the culture, refinement and steadfastness characteristic of the Yankee Missourian is well portrayed. The worst thing about the book is its typographical construction. (Scroff Publishing company, Chicago.)

*Globe Democrat*

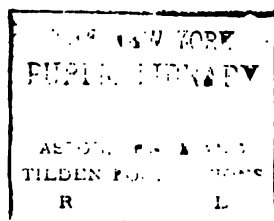
Mr Andrew Carnegie

With compliments of -  
The Astor

Virginia Gates McClarne  
{ Moberly Missouri }

MS  
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"Todd's strong hands gave him back the life he prized."—Chapter 22.

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# The MacGregors

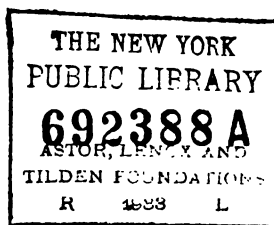
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MARSHALL HOME, JR.

Chicago, Illinois, 1901



CHICAGO:  
SCROLL PUBLISHING COMPANY  
1901





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**DEDICATED**  
**TO**  
**THREE BRAVE BROTHERS, WHO**  
**MARCHED GAYLY OFF TO THE**  
**WAR. ONLY TWO CAME BACK.**  
**THE AUTHOR.**

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## PREFACE.

---

In this little tribute to the Confederate Soldier, there is a vein of defense. It is not needed by a prosperous South. It is a story of Missouri, showing how she was drawn into the whirlpool of secession when her people were divided; many of them thinking it best to battle for their rights under the "Old Flag." Their sympathies were with the South: the contest resulted that left half the state in ruins. The story grew from the ashes.

It is drawn truthfully, that the children and the children's children of these old soldiers may know the conscience that moved their fathers, and the brave fight they made for conscience's sake; that they may know how they lived through war-times, and how they bore the crush of defeat. Their proud courage through the trials of "reconstruction" won the admiration of the world.

The old bitterness faded before the respect of a generous foe; and heroes who wore the Gray, fight today for the Stars and Stripes.

The popularity of Colonial stories gives an intimation of how valuable truthful annals of the Civil War may be, by the middle of the century. The entire truth cannot be given to posterity, if history accounts }

*Preface.*

it only as a bare "Rebellion." Nor should the struggle of a great people, who upheld with the sword the rights they claimed be allowed to fade to a misty tradition.

The writer attempted a raid on these fields that promise treasures of romance for Missouri, because—no one else would.

An old scrap-book, bristling with the spirit of war, was brought into use, and many old soldiers have kindly contributed data and truthful description. The pen at the last, is laid aside, with the regrets that followed good-byes to these valued friends in the shadowy past.

The Author.

# The MacGregors.

---

## CHAPTER I.

{ "History should represent the conscience of mankind."  
—Lamartine. }

"Monk! Monk! Wake up!"

"Yes, sir! Coming, sir. What will you have?"

"I'll have you make a fire and brighten things up a little."

Monk, a negro boy of fifteen, black, with an immense mouth, ugly and shrewd, looked incredulous. "It is only 2 o'clock, sir!"

"I can't sleep; what must I do?"

"Well," replied Monk, meditatively, proud of being appealed to, "You might let the rest of us sleep." His master was getting in this vile habit of rousing him up in the middle of the night, to rest, he said, and Monk's manner was a silent protest as he fanned the fire, his great mouth serving as bellows. He sat down, wondering if this thing had to go on all the time, and if he would have to give up two hours sleep every night (one-fourth of all the solid comfort he got out of life). Better thoughts came as he watched the fine old gentleman—the embodiment of every-



thing good and great in Monk's eyes—"The MacGregor," he had once heard a gentleman call him; Monk caught up the name at once, and he was "The MacGregor" to the whole countryside. Monk had placed a small basket on the table, and when tired of his paper, the MacGregor worked away, picking the seed from snowy bunches of cotton; the seeds laid carefully away, the cotton on another corner of the table, all with the precision that exposes the dreary effort to kill time. Monk would lie down at first, and shake with suppressed laughter at sight of the MacGregor picking cotton in the middle of the night, but he began to watch the upbuilding of that little pyramid of cotton seed with a sort of painful interest, when trying to keep awake.

"You would make a poor guard, Monk! In old times in the homes of my ancestors, every Scott had his seneschal, or keeper, to guard his home."

"Ah, sir! Those were great days!" Monk interrupted him respectfully, his tone filled with longing for something to break the deadly sleepiness creeping over him.

The MacGregor smiled. "They would have suited you, Monk." The present naturally recalling war scenes first; "when the slogan of the high-landers rang through the land, the beacon fires were lighted on the hill-tops; from hill to hill the war-cry spread among the clans. The enemy, separated, perhaps, by a mountain range, could see the fires reflected

on the midnight sky, while they went on coolly with plans for a raid to carry away the cattle of their fighting neighbors, as soon as the war was on in earnest. Might was law, the power belonged to the conqueror, and fight, fire and death was the portion of the conquered, or flight to the wild hills where men lived for a century."

The negro listened in rapt attention, his strong frame was tense, his breath coming in long gasps.

"Ah, sir, it was glorious! Oh! That old master had made me white! To live like a clod in the dead monotony of days when there is nothing ahead!"

The MacGregor looked at him in pity, for his state coupled with his strange nature and the courage of some monster king. He watched the boy's blazing eyes that shone with a curious light when he told him of wars and dangers. After a minute he said gently, "Monk, I fear the wild man in you will find enjoyment in the devil's work around us here; you may see war enough to satisfy you."

"Don't you fear, sir, of that. The devil has the manliness to make his work thorough; and his work can be laid at no man's door; this work here is man's; greedy and narrow, they envy and snarl. It is all words, sir; the men up North fire off their words; they know we won't stand it. We send words back, and dare 'em to trouble us. But they don't dare, and it is all words. I would like a fight only for the pitiful feeling a person must have, to

join in a fight raised to steal a poor set of niggers who are a nuisance to their masters now, and would be a nuisance to every Yankee, if he could carry one off on his back."

"There is no fear of that," the MacGregor told him.

"What is the trouble then, sir?"

"You have explained it among the offenses that you disdain; in addition, they want a finger in every pie; they have stirred themselves up till they can't settle; and think it is a good time to light the fuse they have been laying for twenty years."

"I would like to know the whole of its workings, sir; with your peculiar style of education you have informed me better on Ancient History than the history of our own times."

The MacGregor laughed and yawned; the cotton seed had sharpened to the pyramid he allowed, and it looked as if he had Monk too wide awake.

"Rob Roy had to fly to the hills," Monk began in seductive tones, but the MacGregor was not to be enticed. "Too late for Rob Roy tonight. To return to the Scottish keepers; I think, if you were guard of the altar fires the enemy would be sure to find you asleep."

Monk replied calmly, "If you strike your foes as hard as you do your friends your altar fires are in no danger."

"How now," said the MacGregor. "You are like

Caliban; only he was embittered by slavery, while you are as free as a lark; you should be called Caliban; I am sorry I named you Monk. You would make a capital Othello, with your conscience, if you had fewer lips."

Monk, like Quilp, resented allusions to his personal appearance, and replied a trifle sulkily, "I will go sometime, to get me a name and a fortune. I don't know though," reflectively, "I might go from here, where I feel so much at home," spreading his hands out with palms upward, "and come back in a few years to find some old codger in here who would not know a mint julep from hard cider."

(The MacGregor smiled, knowing how much that distinction meant to Monk).

"This is a big world," Monk continued, gravely. "I heard Miss Faith read about Robinson Crusoe—now, just see what he did, with nothing to start on, and the wonderful adventures of Don Quixote. But one day I thought I should die. Miss Faith was reading in the summer house, about the hero who flew over great seas to kill the Gorgon, and old Dilsie crept out by the vines to listen. I couldn't listen for watching her. When Miss Faith got to the three old hags (the gray sisters, she called 'em) away up in the land that has no name, with one eye and one tooth between them, I thought Dilsie would have a fit, just out of pure enjoyment; she rolled her eyes, clasped her hands, and listened as if her life depended

on it, to see if the hero got hold of the eye as they passed it around. All that kind of stuff is meat and bread to a witch," shaking his head solemnly, "but it was too much for me," showing a narrow line of perfect, white teeth as he saw the MacGregor's amusement. Then, after a pause, "Who was Caliban, sir?"

"Oh! A monster; thought his master a tyrant and all that; as full of ingratitude as yourself. I sit up here and read Shakespeare and politics and talk of great philosophers—" "But, sir," interrupted Monk, "in the middle of the night sleep is better than philosophy, until one is wide awake."

"A monkey like you only needs little snatches of sleep."

"If I did," said Monk, "you would not find it so hard to wake me."

"As to that, it is easy enough to awaken you when you are asleep, but devilish hard to arouse you when you are awake!"

Monk enjoyed that, his face stolidly calm, with eyes narrowed to slits that made his face resemble an iron mask, and gave no intimation of internal fun. It had been raining and the fire cheered the damp, cool night. The MacGregor's eyes rested on the blaze, his long firm fingers closed quietly around the pyramid of cotton seeds. In the blaze he saw the terrors of civil war, the suffering that must fall on a fair

and prosperous land. The flame flickered and fell, and he looked at the red coals, his mind wandering back to the war tales of his boyhood, when his father lived on the pretty slopes of the Blue Ridge in Virginia. He had left his home in far-away Scotland for a new country, and stopped in the fertile valley that had something of the rugged beauty of Scotland in the grand, blue shadows above it. He saw himself in youth, with his bonny wife, leaving the old home for the wild tramp over the Alleghanys in search of wide acres and cheaper lands; he had settled finally in picturesque south Missouri. After twenty years of hard toil, his fields and orchards stretched away, green and thrifty, over valley and plain; a fine heritage for his beloved boys. How he had planned for them. No Scottish MacGregor of old had longed for stalwart, warlike sons to fight for their clans, as he had longed to see his boys, so good and true, grown to manhood that would crown his old age with honor. And his daughters, so sweet and so dear to him; their mother had given Faith to him with loving, trustful eyes when death was dragging her away from him; she had died with her hand clasped over the pink fingers of the baby who had now grown so like her mother. He came back to the present with a start; the fire had burned out, Monk was sound asleep, his great chin uptilted; his candles were spluttering, falling, and the lions on the great brass and-

ironi stood rampant and menacing in the uncertain light.

---

Next morning the MacGregor tried to throw off forebodings of trouble, as he enjoyed his usual stroll with his friend and neighbor, John Winstead.

They walked through the orchard, the apple trees a pink and white splendor around them, the dewy blossoms scenting the air.

The glow of the spring morning; the song of birds, the lovely green of grass and trees, all seemed too perfect to be jarred with the discords clouding the distance.

"Missouri is grand, an ideal place for brave, good homes," the MacGregor said, his eyes bright with pleasure. Then he frowned, as he pointed to a distant hill beyond his fields. "See that glaring white thing over there? That fellow cut down a grove of magnificent trees to let that house show; such a man is a blot on the face of the earth."

As they neared the edge of the woodland pasture they stopped to look over a broad field in the hurry of late planting. Three or four men were ploughing, going abreast down the long rows, while boys dropped the corn or covered with the hoe. The two men looked up at a flock of noisy blackbirds, their restless songs rising or falling as they darted up and down, now in the trees, and now floating above in a black, shining circle. A lazy chant came from the

field, brought to mind, no doubt, with their noisy visitors.

"Come, said the blackbird t—o the crow,  
Down to the cornfield we will g—o;  
For ever since—old Adam was made,  
Pullin' up corn—has been our trade."

"Yes," said the MacGregor, as the wild melody ceased, "tearing down and pulling up before the crop is planted; old Dilsie would call it an evil omen; she has read the stars, she says, and war is surely on us."

"Pshaw," answered his friend, "I'll wager that Monk opposes her theories, and he is the smartest of the two."

Mr. Winstead was a jolly bachelor who never borrowed trouble; and he said he certainly wouldn't borrow a war.

"I'd like for somebody to tell me which is the smartest of those two. Dilsie, with more plots in the 'windings of her head' than anybody else could dream of, and Monk, with the wits of a counselor behind the face of a gorilla."

Mr. Winstead interrupted. "Here he is now; speak of the devil, etc. Look at him. Monk is at his best with horses. It is the pride of the conqueror."

Monk drove up, one hand gripped firmly on the reins, the other circling a whip with an art that was a triumph.



"Monk is always at his best," the MacGregor answered warmly; and Monk was happy over words of praise from the master whom he adored; as they drove off, Monk hopped to his perch behind, from which he had gathered many crumbs of wisdom during their long rides.

The MacGregor watched the trouble creeping upon them from all sides; but different sections of the state were roused as the people differed. Many were shocked at thought of leaving the Union. Stanch descendants of Revolutionary forefathers, they prized their freedom, their citizenship, and had their own opinions regarding state's rights. They saw these rights scorned when opposed to the government, saw the government changing its fundamental laws for partisan ends. Opposed to secession as well as coercion, they waited for some better adjustment of the trouble. To many of these, the war came as a thunderbolt, its deluge of blood and horror in its wake.





"A young woman stood a moment, then vanished suddenly."—Chapter 2.

## CHAPTER II.

"We must all hang together, or, assuredly, we shall hang separately."  
—*Ben. Franklin.*

In a quiet neighborhood below Springfield, a dull place the mail reached once a week, a group of farmers were discussing something of interest, as developments were tending to the supernatural. Prejudices may vanish, superstition clings to many peoples. It may be only a nursery jingle; no matter in what shape, it is nearly always a common inheritance.

A tiny cabin seemed suspended from a steep bluff that rose, shaggy and green-crowned above a restless little stream that tumbled along on its way to White river. On closer view, it had a firm ledge for support, and was strong and well built.

The scattering settlers regarded each man's home as his castle, and respected the privacy of "The Hermit," as they called the owner of the gray castle on the cliff.

Many of them had gone out to the Ozark country to find homes on government land as early as 1830, and the cabins of homesteaders soon nestled among the bright little spots at the foot of the hills. If they were not homesteaders no questions were asked in the early days, if residents were quiet and law-

abiding. The habit of allowing every man to mind his own business was deemed a sacred justice to one's neighbor.

Uncle Sam seemed far away, a mythical person, without real needs, and so far removed from their humble solicitude.

Warren King had disappeared from his castle on the bluff. As days went by, and he did not return, the men gathered in squads, looked up at the lonely cabin and wondered what to do. They were not in the habit of disturbing his privacy; but if a wrong had been done, they would consider it a public trust to see him righted.

Luke Patton confirmed the report of a mystery that excited them further.

"I tell you what!" he said hotly, in answer to doubting looks, "my women folks seen it plain. Somethin' white stepped out on the very aige of the bluff, an' then vanished agins' the light. Now, what wuz it, an' whar did it go? And—what my wimmen folks see, with ther own eyes, no man kin doubt."

Taking in the crowd with a flash of his tawny eyes. His listeners secretly admired this proud loyalty to his household.

Luke was small and hard; clothed in brown jeans, with a rough, brown beard bristling over his face that added to his general burry appearance; one thin hand, held up aggressively, showed wiry, brown hairs above his short coat sleeve.

These farmers endured the dead monotony of life on the lonely hillsides as something planned for them from the beginning; when collected, in any public function, they listened with the grave interest of the Indian in council. They frowned at Johnce Limber when he spoke up glibly, against the outstretched hand. "It were a hant! Ever body says so!"

Luke had his cue. He and Johnce quarreled over religion, politics, horses and crops. If he could not be allowed to peep into the realms of mystery, without being burdened with Johnce Limber, he would stick to the realities.

"Time will develop who it were." Luke's dry voice laid the ghost before it fairly sprang into being. But Johnce was not to be suppressed so easily.

"Kin you deny that the sunset that evenin' had cu'ious gleams in it, an' throwed lights an' shadders, like a great kelpy, right on that hill?"

Luke looked at him severely. "F I had that pore little bit of ground layin' in the fallow sence last fall I'd go plant it, an' let the Lord tend to the sunsets as He pleases."

Johnce showed no sign of shame, and went on with irrepressible scorn.

"Hant or human, youins seem set on havin' females mixed up in it, an' yit calculate to straighten it out."

Luke steered around this dangerous quicksand

with a show of zeal in other work. "Howsomever, this aint's organizing for the hunt of War'n King. It is no time for idle words! There is a rumor of war that may shake us from our foundations! And a hurt has been done to a fellow-citizen in our mongst! We must organize, an'—" Sweeping his gaze over the group, he met a new pair of eyes that confused him, and his eloquence was cut short.

"Go ahead, Luke! I wish you could find him! We need his counsel sorely."

"Hear! Hear!" cried a voice. "Frank Truman's home from Springfield!"

Young Truman looked over the crowd from his six feet of vantage. In his jeans clothes and big soft top-boots, he looked like a stalwart hunter masquerading in mountain garb; fine gray eyes, handsome, strong face, and black, curling hair gave the distinguishing touches to the hunter's presence.

"The war is surely on us, my friends; if you have cherished delusions as to what the government will do for us as a state, listen while I tell you that a Federal army invades it even now, with guns and bayonets to prevent secession."

"We don't want to secede," one spoke up emphatically. "We want to be let alone, to go or stay as every man's right."

"Your conscience must decide quickly," Frank continued, "if you hope to claim that as a right. At Camp Jackson, in St. Louis, General Frost had com-

mand of the Missouri militia. Two captains of the United States army, recruiting there, Lyon and a foreigner, heard that some of these state troops sympathized with the South, and ordered the arrest of the whole brigade. The officers thought it impertinent, but laid down their arms to avoid trouble. They marched them through the streets, and somebody in the crowd hurled abusive epithets at the Federals. Then the foreign captain, they say, gave command to fire. Forty persons were killed in the excited crowd, women and children among them. Missourians resented it as an insult.

"The president has called for troops from Missouri, and Gov. Jackson refused to send them for the purpose of fighting the South. He and General Price are raising men to protect the state. The Federals are massing soldiers on the state, and the excitement is intense. Men must decide at once. We can't wait to see what the other states will do. We have to defend our own.

"I want you to think it over, and talk to each other."

Frank had made a speech without intending it; he did not want the men inflamed, and was content to leave the matter in their hands.

The men went home sorely disturbed. They had not thought of war as touching them, and had vague ideas of its horrors. They had worked in peace for their homes and daily needs. They had the beauti-



ful green of the earth, in the sweet time of its youth, and the blue hills of the Ozarks looked over them protectingly. Their quiet had not been invaded by geologists, or any exciting thirst for gold. They had felled the great trees and burned them wastefully, with no man to forbid. Like the growth of their forests, they had run, happy and unpruned, their own wild way.

They had crossed the hills to discuss a mystery; as they went home they had a real crisis to ponder over. Their little homes, nestling among the hills, that they had toiled so hard to build, looked strangely weak and helpless before what they had to face. A few more days, and the mad fury was on them, both sides ready to give offense, and both resentful of taking it.

\* \* \* \* \*

Young Truman hurried home to tell his mother the news; she was full of enthusiasm and proud of his courage.

"No Southern mother will hold her boy from duty," she said bravely.

Frank kissed her, and then took himself to task for his wild elation.

"Is it all patriotism, or mostly a desire to get out in the world anywhere?" He walked up to the glass and looked squarely at the jubilant face within. "You are a vagabond, Frank Truman; you inherited the restless blood of your father, and you have got

to fight it out; you would leave the home the brave little mother made for you, and leave her—for what? And yet, oh, great world, that is ever a world of hope to the young, what do you hold for me if I make the fight—and win? Ah, time will tell.”

His parents had married in St. Louis county and moved, with a little colony, to seek cheaper lands in the Ozark country, twenty-five years before. They secured a pretty place south of the hills. The father was a great handsome fellow, who did not take kindly to the hard work of pioneer life, and preferred to hunt, or lie in the sunshine; he was killed in a hunt when Frank was a baby, and the young widow bravely set out to run the farm in summer and teach the country school in winter. The results of her refining care were seen in many homes around them; the long, hard years passed happily in the companionship of her idolized son, who soon relieved her of all the care of the prospering farm. The son had inherited the splendid physique of the father; his character, with the fine lines of his face, were his mother's.

Frank was anxious to see Warren King, and started up the bluff, curiously excited by the hints of foul play he had heard on his return. King had come among them, a dark, grave man of forty, built his little house in quiet, thankful to the people that allowed it without intruding on his privacy. He had shown the path that wound around the hill to his castle to one friend, young Truman. Spite of his

cynical resolves, he had been drawn to Frank's bright face and interested in the ambitious dreams of the youth; he loaned him books and papers, and talked of the wide world that Frank so longed to see. He never alluded to his past. Frank had carried him letters once or twice in a delicate, girlish hand; and once he picked up a photograph that fell from a book, a lovely face with dark eyes that were strangely beautiful. Frank saw King's face, and he knew the picture belonged to his past.

He wanted him now, as he felt instinctively that King had the stuff in him that soldiers were made of.

The steep bluff was a glory in yellow and green, as the setting sun threw its red blaze from crown to base, and sent little quivering streaks of light across the creek between the long shadows of the trees.

Frank climbed the hill, and looked out over the lonely place, down the long green valley with the creek breaking now and then into splashes of foam as it tumbled over rocky beds; afar off, it glistened like a narrow ribbon bordered with green. The hermit had read Emerson to him on yonder hillside a few weeks ago; his glints of fancy were mixed in his memory, with

"The blackberry's starry blossom  
And the buttercup's chalice of gold."

Frank contrasted Emerson searching in the forest

for the "nearness to God" the poet craved, and his hermit friend seeking to carry his sore heart to some "sullen glen" for his brooding.

King had frowned over the passage, "Man must not lament the past with reverted eyes," and shut the book impatiently.

Frank found the house deserted and locked. At the back door, the only entrance, he saw a woman's tracks by the porch, and said aloud, "Mrs. Patton's ghost had long, slim feet."

As he went back, he overtook Johnce Limber on his road to the village.

"Hello, Johnce; going down for powder and shot, I'll warrant."

"Well, yes," Johnce drawled in answer. "I was in town an' forgot 'em, that is, well, ye see—times is bad at our place; we ain't got a thing to go on, an' young squirls he'ps out." To do him justice, Johnce did keep his family in meat, and that of the best, as long as his powder lasted.

Frank gave him some coins. "Now you can go back for the powder, but remember to bring me a young squirrel."

Johnce was grateful, though his civilization knew no form of thanks. And he was jubilant, a world of trouble was lifted from his shoulders that made his going home possible, and his vision flew to the forests he would roam tomorrow, on the possibilities of the gift.

"Right here," he said, warmed to confidence, "I met the strange young woman that day; rec'n she thought I wuz the porest speciment on the road, an' she ast me the way to the hummit's house."

"How!" exclaimed Frank. "What young woman?"

"Dunno, I'm shore! Didn't youins hear of it?"

"No," replied Frank. "Was she young?"

"Well,—yes, I rec'n."

"And good looking?" with much interest.

"Well, as fur's that's concerned, I dunno; she was bean-poly like; now I like to see a woman with mo' heft to her," with generous candor, "an' she'd a long nose an' white skin, an', cum to think on it, she'd a pair of cu'ious colored eyes that shot right thoo you; she wuz tall,"—reflectively—"well, as tall as yore shoulder," looking up at Frank and squinting his eyes as if he were looking at the sun.

They separated soon after, and Johnce whistled as he rattled his change to his tune, unconscious that he had furnished Frank an item of special interest. He was small and thin, and rattled as he walked along in a loose-jointed way, that suggested the name of Limber, though he had really been christened Blimber.

Frank heard his voice far up the hill singing defiantly—

"I'll take my big jug d-o-w-n to town—"

### CHAPTER III.

**"Habit is habit, and not to be flung out of the window by any man, but coaxed down stairs a step at a time."**

*—Mark Twain.*

The war was not so depressing as yet, as to crowd all social interest from a lively "settlement" on Finley creek.

Mrs. Turner, whom people called the gossip, had heard vague rumors of a "political meetin'" and startling stories of the ghost on the bluff; she went to see Mr. Kerens, the "Sage" of the country-side, hoping that he could enlighten her. She climbed a long shaded hill to his little cabin on its crest, and found him on the porch, seated on a rude bench with a circular leather inserted in one end, while the other held some rude cobbler's tools. He rose to welcome her with patriarchal dignity, his long, white hair falling softly below his wide hat; he removed it, and the immense size of his shining, bald head filled her with dismay.

("It was not to be expected that Mrs. Turner should rise to the mocking satire of the wit and genius—Thackeray—who raised the crown from Caesar's head, that the world might laugh at the baldness beneath the laurels.")

The grotesque, see-sawing movements of the

Sage's toothless mouth, as his lips worked and clapped together as he talked, disconcerted her beyond any show of veneration; she was so absorbed in its alarming movements, she forgot the excuse she had prepared for going to see a lone man, and fell lamely to the usual formula, "Howdy," and "How air you?"

"Tolable," he said slowly, while he eyed her with suspicion.

She began rather nervously under it, "There seems to be some kind of a dull trouble settlin' over the village; the men talk an' talk when a paper comes; the women hain't took hold of it much yet, an' ther's nothin' much to find out till they do; on the whole, it was such a unsatisfyin' time, that I was glad to hear while I was away that they was somethin' goin' on down on Finley creek. Now, do you believe that pore man on the bluff was murdered? And what's the tales flyin' around about the ghost? Of course, I thought the first thing, of comin' to the Sage, whose wisdom was needed to throw light on questions of importance." And she bent her black eyes on him persuasively.

The Sage had outlived such blandishments. His thin lips merely worked out the question, "How'd ye cross the crick?"

"I crossed on the foot bridge, an' left my hoss at Miss Davises."

"To be sho! an' resky too! But the's nothin' cin stop a female bent on mischeef."

Mrs. Turner looked at him so hard he turned to pick up a wooden last, and examined its scarred sole carefully. Mrs. Turner dismissed this general calumny with a little mocking laugh, and the Sage peered over the last tremulously. She held herself with both hands as she asked adroitly:

"And how about the hant, Uncle Dan'el?"

"They wuz'nt none! They wuz some fool talk 'bout somethin' white bein' on the bluff; I know'd thereckly it wuz a passel of tales started by wimmen what ain't got no work to do at home." (He had the grace to shy his eyes away from her as he went on): "I went yistiddy to see Miss Patton—not that I usually waste my time—she talked for one hour 'bout everything under the sun, with nothin' to any of it. I come away, pintedly shore of one thing, she can't mix me up any with that tongue of hern. Yes, a livin' here in the solitood keeps my head clear-like."

He looked away again from the silent scorn he could feel, as he added:

"How Luke Patton stands it I can't see; cu'ious part of it (and a personal anger swelled his voice), is to see him set sich store by her! No, I couldn't sense nothin' out of what she said; but," after a pause, "I know in reason, they wan't no ghost."

Mrs. Turner sat staring blankly at the thick trees



that shut his cabin in from the world; and in truth, his forest-folk were all that he had. The Sage watched her; his big, pale blue eyes looking strangely owl-like in such an old head, with about the same right to the wisdom back of them as that "over-rated bird." He followed her glance across the green motion of the oak leaves to the tall pines tossing restlessly on the bluff beyond.

"It's a hard fact!" he said, "that a man must git to be a ole man befo' he can see the glory of a summer day in all its fullness; when we reelize there are not many summers lef' to us, we begin to know the perfection of the natur that surroun's us."

Mrs. Turner was not in harmony with nature. A pet robin, who had his daily share of the crumbs from the modest table, had twittered and fluttered at sight of a woman on the big, shady porch; he slanted his eye at them in sympathy with the long silence. then warmed with sound, broke into glad song when they talked, doing his best to fill the gaps and reconcile the differing views of the estimable people who were all unconscious of his song.

Mrs. Turner observed in a discouraged tone, "It's lonesome out here."

"Oh, yes!" he replied cheerfully, "but lonesomeness ain't nothing; in fact stillness ain't lonesomeness to a man thet has his thoughts. Hit's a leetle matter to be seventy year old, ef a man cin keep his eyes

an' his yerse an' all his faculties; and thes so many things to look back on."

He stopped as if to ponder on the time when age becomes conscious of how little there is to look forward to; when the wonder of life is gone, its beauty fading, and the wide, beautiful future of youth narrowing to the things we look back on.

Mrs. Turner answered softly, "That's what I always told 'Sterner."

The Sage raised his hand against this.

"I mind me," he went on, "of pioneer times when people lived thoo what they called hardships. Shucks! fur'z that's concerned, that rustlin' an' all that, in sarch of cretur comforts, wer jist fun to me. You see I had somebody to he'p," catching his breath in a deep sigh. "In all my time the Laud ain't never laid his hand hard on me but oncet; that was when he took my wife, ten years ago. Ah! then I groped in the valley an' the shadder." Another pause, then, "Sich a fine woman as she were! Tall an' strong, just goin' on in that smooth, easy way that were jist hern, an' she never shirkt a duty in her life. I can't say it of nary nother woman I ever knowed," he added, on reflection.

Mrs. Turner stirred uneasily, and the Sage expanded with his theme.

"No, suh! she would do all of her woman's work, go out with me to split rails an' lay fences, come in

an' git a good dinner, an' then do her stent at weaving or spinnin', yes, suh! twenty cuts a day, easy. No common woman could tech her. An' when we lifted the logs to our house, she hilt up one eend while I hilt the other. Yes, suh!" He was getting excited. Mrs. Turner noted the varied play of his features in painful fascination, and found herself watching for the peculiar effect on his nose when his lips came together. She remembered that once when she was a child, she sat huddled in the snow while she waited for a poor, little rabbit to enter a dead-fall her brother had set for him. She smiled at the vivid memory of that day, when encircled with the frozen Alleghanies, which this suspense recalled.

There was not much time in her busy life for these retrospections, that so stirred the old Sage of the Ozarks. She looked down at his poor, rusty shoes, home-made, and wondered why he turned the corners square. All the while her upper foot swung back and forth like a pendulum, from the perch it obtained, in moments of severe absorption. She knew that he was called a big talker, and she knew that twenty cuts a day was a whopper.

She tried agreeably to divert him.

"What do you think of the war, Uncle Dan'el?"

"Nothin' yit; it mayn't tech us; no use in gittin' all het up over it for nothin'; my father fit through the Revolution fer peace to foller; them Yankees dasn't up-turn such a government as they founded

for a few niggers; fur'z I'm concerned, I never seed one that I wanted, or that I'd have, an' I'm a Union man, too. Young Frank Truman said he'd git to the bottom of it, an' he will, too, I bet."

Enfused beyond discretion, at recollection of the meeting a few days before, he went on to tell Mrs. Turner of it, of "how Johnce Limber breshed up agins Luke Patton afterward, an' 'cused him of a insult, an' Luke Patton one solid piece of hammered steel; think of it!" And he spread his mouth to her consternation. "Cose Johnce got a lickin'. I writ a little piece of potery on it," he added modestly, and straightening himself slowly, he shambled into the cabin, and came back with a piece of paper which he unfolded with care and studied with frowning attentiveness. Mrs. Turner stopped swinging her foot to listen to his thrilling description of the fight. The last two lines were his especial pride:

"They had left their noses an' their yeres—  
But—the price of fame is blood and tears."

Mrs. Turner was reminded of a story about the Sage hunting a cow. A neighbor asked if he had been to the salt-lick bottom, when the Sage replied, "I've been all over creation."

Mrs. Turner had a heavy suit of black hair, which she wore in the Psyche knot of fifteen years before, and fastened with a big comb; the weight of it pulled

it down, so the Psyche was usually on the back of her neck. She shook it down, then gathered up the rippling mass with deft fingers, and pinned it in place. The Sage chuckled inside his thin lips.

"I know she's mad, from the way she socked that comb in."

Mrs. Turner went away; like Mark Twain's pistol ball, "If she didn't get what she went after she would fetch something else."

She decided as she went down the long hill that his non-committal platform was a general slight to her sex.

"Ole dunce," she said aloud, "recon he thinks I ought to be splittin' rails stid of upholdin' trusts that people hold me responsible for."

If they had belonged to a different civilization, she would have advised him to get some store teeth, so the children need not be scared to sleep with stories of old Daddy Ker'ns; but her honest tongue would have bungled.

The Sage was saying, his head low between his chuckling shoulders, "Good enough fer her! She's a pusson of too much business; 'fi'd give her any chance, she'd a set here two mortal hours, and I am hongry now."

He went into the one room of his house, scattered the ashes that covered the heaps of coals in the fireplace, with strong emphasis, and went about getting his lonely supper. He was in the anomalous

position of having exhausted his love for woman-kind on his own wife, and never attempted a second marriage, not even for the pleasure of telling No. 2 about the worth of "the other one."

But Mrs. Turner was right in her premises. Mr. Kerens believed that females should be strictly home-spun; happily unconscious that now, in his old age, he was just entering the era that produced the "New Woman."

But it was nearly too much for the Sage that the calm of his life was broken twice in a few days. Luke Patton came bouncing in on him, and accused him of writing "stuff" about him. The Sage rolled his big, white eyes and said soothingly, "Now, Luke, don't git riled. It was jist a leetle ventur at potery that didn't hurt you a bit, an' it nearly killed me." Luke laughed so explosively at this the old man stuck his awl in the bench in embarrassed silence; after a minute, he flamed up hotly:

"S'pose Miss Turner took an' went over the country with that for news. She clum this hill a purpose to nose out something. I know'd it thereckly she come; if she jist walks through the woods, gossip will swing from ever bough; an' though I felt such a burning intrust in that ghost business myself, I said with my hammer that I would not gratify her with ary word; and when I say anything with that hammer it's my oath, suh!"

"Now see here, Uncle Dan'l, you take it easy, I

do say! You can't pull the wool over my eyes with all that. A good looking widow a comin' away up here to gossip with a man who's got a national reputation as a Sage! Scat! People will pinionate to suit themselves about that; fact is, they have already."

His yellow eyes were shining with fun, but the Sage fairly hopped up and down in his anger. "I tell you," he cried viciously, "a woman what's got nothing but tongue to her makes me sick. A layin' by ever word the whole endurin' time, agins the day she can tell somebody else! Just what I told Sterner!" and he mimicked Mrs. Turner surprisingly, "that would kill me!"

"Well, Uncle Dan'l, don't be so ~~vig~~<sup>f</sup>rous about it, tim'll tell what she clum the hill for," and he grinned over the total collapse he left in the cabin.

## CHAPTER IV.

"Equipped as for a holiday,  
All cheerily we marched away."

—*Ed. P. Thompson.*

Hundreds had crossed the Ozarks to enlist with General Price while he was in camp in Newton county in the last days of June. Governor Jackson was on his way to join him with 5,000 men who, like Price's, were poorly armed.

The Federals were plainly bent on following their aggressive policy, thinking to route the new recruits as they had done at Boonville, where General Lyon, with well armed soldiers had dispersed a few hundred men under Price, in the middle of June. Lyon supposed it would be a small matter to disperse the raw recruits rallying to Price, and started to the southwest; Siegel was in South Missouri with three or four thousand troops, and Sturgis was in Kansas, ready to attack the western border.

The Confederates were recruiting and drilling, even when fairly on the wing, and bent on underestimating the men who were hunting them down. General Lyon came to St. Louis as a captain; a military man of undaunted courage and skill, as he soon proved himself, in securing control of the United States forces in the west. He had the loyal citizens



enrolled and armed as home-guards before their Southern neighbors dreamed of the need of action for defense. General Harney was, in his way, a man who was not aggressive enough with his Southern friends; so Harney was sent to Washington, and Lyon began operations in Missouri with the attack on Camp Jackson; having visited the camp it was said, disguised as an old woman, he found Southern sympathizers among them and denounced the whole camp as traitors; he saw no rights for our people, and was not the first representative of his kind who thought the South should be governed by the laws that other people made for them.

General Price was a military man who was renowned and honored in social and political life; he appointed a time to meet the officers in St. Louis, to negotiate terms of peace for Missouri. Many amusing stories were told of Lyon's offers, "of what my government will do, etc.," and he dictated plans for Missouri that Price could not accept. The lesson Lyons taught Missourians at Camp Jackson sent many recruits to the Southern army.

\* \* \* \* \*

A company of young soldiers fell in with Governor Jackson's army as he marched south to join Price. With this company from Green, Christian and Taney counties, Frank Truman found himself celebrating the 4th of July, '61.

It was a motley crowd as to looks, with one man in ten armed and equipped like a soldier; but the whole line was a solid mass of enthusiasm when a scout reported Siegel at Neosho.

Frank Truman was greatly interested in a young soldier by his side, who stood two inches above his six feet, and was magnificently proportioned; fine, black eyes and dark red hair, made the young giant more conspicuous. A youth of twenty, a fairer edition of the other, was pressing a question before his elder brother.

"They are going on a raid, my boy, hadn't you better stay in camp?"

"Not if you go, my Bruce, will I stay in camp! a pretty story to go back to the MacGregor!"

"But I promised the MacGregor to take care of you; I am responsible to him for both his sons, and these raw fellows will probably get into no end of trouble."

"If you are personally responsible, I will be bound to go right along with you, don't you see?"

"But Archie, this promises to be a fight, with much more danger than glory."

"I am here to risk my share of both."

"Have your way then," and he turned to Frank, "Are you with us, comrade?"

"Certainly! where to?" Bruce MacGregor turned at the ready answer, and looked in the handsome, alert face of his neighbor attentively.

"A scout has brought news of Siegel in front.  
Generals Parsons and Clark are getting up a little

\* \* \* \* \*

expedition to go that way."

They marched over the hills and through green,  
shaded valleys while all around

"The woods were filled so full of song,  
There seemed no room for sense of wrong."

Yet this march would bring together armies of men  
who had lived like brothers.

"I wonder," said Bruce as they marched along,  
"how the Yankees feel in going into such a fight  
as we may find? We are led to believe the main  
army is the scum of the North, men who could not  
make as much money in any other way. Of course  
there are officers and men too, of intelligence and  
character. Can you realize how you would feel,  
standing up to shoot a man who has done you no  
harm, merely in the spirit of war?"

"I can realize that the feeling of men oppressed  
with wrong, and fired with the mad haste of the  
whole thing, will be stirred with a hate that will  
guide many a bullet with a deadly aim."

Frank felt again the steady gaze Bruce gave him  
before replying, "Oh yes! I know; ours is the feel-  
ing of men in a beleagured city, there is no way to get  
out but to fight out; either that or the surrender  
of home and principle."

"And the niggers," Archie laughed, as he put in here, "Bruce has moralized on this thing enough to have effected a compromise if the powers that be would heed. I don't stop to argue when a fight is forced on me."

He was the gayest of the company when they stopped to send out an advance-guard. Joking and singing, he came up to his brother with hands full of wild flowers, which he threw over him, "the tributes of the 'wood-gods', who speed us to success." Looking over the camp, "There is poor Simon Landy, trying to cook; if I am ever an officer of importance, I will make Sime my scout; he could not walk very fast, but his tracks would blind." They saw Landy, a great, big-hearted Scotchman, intent on making himself useful, hobbling about, with his poor, clubbed feet, that never backed down before an enemy's cannon.

Archie offered to lighten his work. "Let me help you, comrade."

"Naw, naw, lad, thank ye kindly; aw'll just swerle aboot till aw finish my sowans, oot av the corn, ye know." Looking after Archie, "What a sonsy lad, his song is better than the lark's; aw think it a peety if this should still it." And he nodded his head as if at trouble in the air and all around. Poor, crippled Sime has given Archie a name that he was always known by in camp; he was the favorite of all, and the regiment knew him as Lark MacGregor.

His song, rising with the lark's in the morning, was still the merriest at night.

On the 6th they found their men, and the skirmish settled into a sharp little fight. Siegel marched out of Carthage with four thousand trained soldiers, to amuse themselves with the capture of this nondescript army of Missourians. They felt the spirit of war in the double-quick charge that scattered them out on the road to Carthage, and the mad pursuit through the woods; another attack after Carthage resulted in the capture of camp and guns; and the Missourians began, with this little fight, their only means of securing arms for the soldiers; their captures armed them during the first year.

The men watched with amaze, the wonders achieved with Guibor's Battery; those who knew of its remarkable up-building. Its execution afterwards belongs to the history of the war in the West.

Here too, our boys first saw Joe Shelby, his fearless, gray eyes alight, his handsome, bold face, that of the ideal soldier.

Archie kept with Bruce through the mad rush that routed Siegel. (The MacGregor smiled over the letter that described this first fight in Missouri.)

They camped that night where Siegel had been the night before, while the latter was on his way to Springfield.

In Macdonald County at the famous camp on "Cowskin Prairie", General Price organized and

drilled the soldiers who flocked to his standard along the route. Like the voices of the shepherds on Palestine Hills, the calls resounded from crest to crest, and he found determined men waiting for his coming.

The old camping ground, now known as Eldorado Springs, was the bustling place where splendid soldiers drilled and learned how to let fly the spirit that was in them.

General Ben McCullough joined Price at Cowskin, and the army prepared for action.

And such an army! Gray-haired men enrolling with a shock of surprise at the need of it; boys of fifteen, full of hope and daring, young and stalwart farmers, representatives of the bravest and best from every city and town from St. Louis to the southern border. There were no social lines as barriers in comradeship; each man looked in his neighbor's eyes to see his own courage confirmed, and the Slogan was home and defiance to the oppressor.

General Price moved from Cowskin to Cassville, in Barry County, on the 25th of July, and combined with the forces under McCullough, McBride and Pearce; on the 1st of August, the march to Springfield began.

## CHAPTER V.

"I ride through the night alone,  
Detached from the lift that seemed.  
And the best I have felt or known  
Is less than the least I dreamed.  
I have waked, I love! Behold  
The Sun in his glory rise!  
And the shadows are pierced with gold,  
From the stars of immortal eyes."

—*Bayard Taylor.*

When camp was struck nearer home, Bruce expressed fears of his father's safety, as they lived seven miles out from Springfield.

"I will just go and see if they are all right," Archie said quickly. "I will go this very night. I must see Faith and Father before another battle. Bruce had a lump in his throat, as he told him he was detailed on special picket duty, and could not go. Archie turned to Frank, who was ever ready for adventure, and together they asked for leave. They were sent to General Price, who gave them permission to go in his service, as scouts.

They were soon mounted and galloping southeast, and reached Branksome at 12 o'clock. The MacGregor's joy was overcast at his son's danger.

"Why Archie, my boy, we are living under a reign of terror. A burley aid was out forging, and asked me if I was secesh. I answered:

"We have not seceded yet, sir."

"Which means, that you will when you get a chance; you won't get it, for we expect to shake down every damned roost that holds a rebel from this on."\*

"I told him that I was no rebel; told him also that General Price, though he did not make war on private citizens, would fight that shaking desire out of him. Nothing saved me but talking up to him; he was angry, and forgot to ask me where my boys were. They loaded up my hay and went away satisfied, for one day."

Monk was sent out as sentinel; he went slowly, greatly upset between his pride in the responsible post, and his desire to stay and hear what was going on. Archie seemed to be all over the house at once, as he went for his sisters; Faith saw a tall stranger in cavalry boots and jeans pants listening to what her father was saying, as it seemed; he was in reality very wide-a-awake to sparkling eyes bent on him from the doorway; so darkly blue beneath heavy lashes, they were nearly black at night; and light hair, the gold of it a shade darker than Archie's. A married

\*(Note. The writer would like to express sufficient emphasis without the use of profanity;—suggested on reading a Northern history of the War, in which about every fourth word put in the mouth of a Southerner was an oath.)



daughter came in who resembled Bruce, with red-brown hair, and big, dark eyes.

"The MacGregors are all red-headed," the father said as he presented her, "They never get handsome till they get gray," stroking his long, gray beard with a large complacency. "And they are all Scotch in name; Mrs. Gray is Helen; all the MacGregors have a Helen. Though I must say I never admired Rob Roy's wife. The name of the place is Scotch, too, "Branksholme," Monk calls it Pranksome. Archie, be sure to tell Mr. Gray that Helen will stay with us for the present. She could not remain in Springfield now, because it would not be safe while he is in the army."

"So they are carrying on the war against women and children." Frank observed, rallying his wits to say something; and it seemed as if his voice came from the bottom of a well; he had whirled through so much of life since he had last spoken.

"It is Union neighbors who stay at home from the war, and run it for personal spite. They try to incite the niggers to turn against us! Fools! If they could see, far in the future, the result of their work, as I see it! For the present, homes, life and property must be sacrificed, the South destroyed, because of a class who hate us and want to make our laws. Not because they love the niggers; they would not treat them as well as we do."

"Do you think," asked Frank, "that Lincoln will

allow them to interfere with slavery? Surely he will give justice to all, and seize this golden opportunity for a hero's fame, when he sees the South will not be coerced."

The MacGregor shook himself as he raised up and said distinctly, "I think the party that has twisted and turned the Republican wedge for twenty years, will strike now to send it home; and Lincoln is in their hands. We can put no estimate on the power behind the throne; give him men and money to whip the South fairly, he may be just to all; if they can't do this, you watch how quickly he will rise to the situation, when the nigger is treed to the wool-pile. The law upheld the Fugitive Slave-Law, yet Northern states set it aside, and refused to give up slaves to their owners, without any cry of danger to the Union; but you just watch for results when a Southern state asserts a claim to the rights every state should have, independent of every other. We act on the principle that they had no right to interfere with our laws, in the first place." Walking the floor in his excitement.

As for Missouri, we are over-run with marauding soldiers today, because we waited on Governor Jackson's forlorn hope of neutrality. De Quincy says this, "It is not alone in the powerful courts of Europe, that war is found growing out of occasions, lest no occasion should arise spontaneously."

The anaconda's folds had been tightening slowly,

and it stiffened to strike, on the occasion Sumpter furnished.

Poor old South! Old, because the old South is gone,—its people have been loved more truly by friends, and maligned more bitterly by enemies, than any people in the world. They are a just people too; they see the ills of slavery, and would, in time, have freed them. This war will cost more money, beside hard feelings and death of our people, to free and colonize every nigger in the South. The states were admitted in pairs a long time, till, I think, there were twelve in North and South. You see, they waited for a majority. And, you observe one other thing; I'll wager there is not a quaker in the army, on either side; they are not a fighting people; yet it is said they have harbored more runaway slaves, and incited more of them to rebellion, than any other class of abolitionists. If any of you live a half century from now, you remember, and observe how any class of fanatics will treat the negro, if they live among them."

The MacGregor stopped, as Faith brought in a lunch, under Archie's special supervision, just as Monk reported a man creeping around in the darkness.

"Only one, Monk?" offering a piece of cake.

"I couldn't see but one; he was dodging about queerly."

"Well run on, Monk, and watch like a good boy,

I won't quit this for one. There might be others though. And Monk, your health before I go."

Monk went in some confusion, drank the wine, and turned with the narrow line of teeth disclosed, that sent Archie's laugh ringing through the hall.

While arranging lunches for the soldiers, Monk reported again.

"A whole company on the big road, Sir!"

"Which way, Monk?"

"Goin' towards Springfield, Sir!"

"All right, Monk; thanks! We will round-about another way!"

In the hurried goodbyes, two pairs of bright eyes met, as young eyes will.

"You must take care of Archie," wistfully. Then in gayer tone, "And Archie must take care of you."

Frank carried the memory of the beautiful, brave eyes through the dark years that followed that eventful night.

Beyond the gate, a man stepped out and cried, "Halt!"

"I am a Confederate scout," he said hurriedly, when they stopped; "I saw you at MacGregor's. I must get a message to Price tonight. Can you take it?"

"Certainly." Frank answered readily.

"It means death if you are caught with it, and a company of Feds. are right over yonder. They are looking to see how many were at the house." Giving

Frank a tiny paper, "It is small; swallow it, if you see capture is certain, and ride as fast as you can. You will have to make a long circuit."

Frank thought his voice familiar, but could not place the bushy whiskers.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Whew! Isn't this great?" Archie exclaimed, softly. "I wish I could yell aloud, or toss my arms, or let myself out some way. Just think of it! I will write to Faith about the quant figure in the dark, with the mysterious message, and the ride through the ghastly forest. It is a ghastly ride, isn't it? See those great, white tree trunks, standing out in the darkness!"

"The realities of the night may be all that your fancy will need, Archie, listen!" They heard the dull tramp of horses coming swiftly.

"They are gaining! If they have rifles, they may bring us down. I will put the paper under my tongue, in a minute; if I fall, you ride for your life, and tell Price to send for it. If they capture you, they may torture your family,—being,—so near. By the time your horse gives out, you will be near our camp."

"I know a jolly cave to hide in, if the worst should come."

"It won't do, Archie; here is the message and the horses!"

"Yes," Archie said as they slowed up to listen, "I would like to keep this horse, if he gets through with this; I would name him 'Light-foot,' for another

'Light-foot,' who was so swift of foot, he would out-run the game, when hunting. So," he added drolly, "they tied his legs."

"Can't you be still, Archie, till we see what we can hear?"

"It would be fun to lure them on a little nearer to the Southern camp."

But the pursuers had stopped, and they walked the rest of the way. Archie rattled on gayly, living over again the dear little visit that had left him so happy, unconscious of Frank's absorbed interest in his own tumultuous fancies. Archie rode on ahead, after a little.

"Light-foot is about as responsive," he added, "I'll talk to him."

"What was the charm of the night?" To his silent friend, the darkness held a misty light that allured, and there was a happy din in the deep forests on either side. There was no sound of war behind him, no black road in front; but there was a radiant vision in front, and

"Her hair was tawny with gold,  
Her eyes with purple were dark."

His hand thrilled where her soft, white fingers had touched it. He had the memory to carry away to the war, of starry eyes and a wild-rose color mounting her cheeks, at his earnest good-by. He felt a

boyish wonder as to how he must appear to this picturesque family. He knew his interest in the MacGregor was absorbing, and Mrs. Gray's haughty eyes had nearly robbed him of self-possession. He wondered if the other sister would be called a beauty too; he saw her face in electric light; he tried to separate her features from the glow and sparkle that his heart had leaped to meet, with the new life that stirred him.

He imagined once that he was in love. It was five years ago, when he was eighteen, and the archetype of his youth was ten years older. Her nose was clearly defined, and her eyes were black and piercing. She lured him to talk of his ambition, of their ambition, of the place in the world she would help him to win. She had "kinder" held on to him while he grew up, with an air of ownership, and he laughed at his serenity, while she "steered the craft."

"Suppose I aimed to be a politician, or she aimed it, and she could write my speeches for me."

Now, she was a scraggy female, relegated to another world, before this "Powerful witchery of blooming womanhood."

What had ambition to do with it any way? Mark Antony said,—

"She is cunning past man's thought."

and calmly watched a world slide away from him. He caught his breath sharply.

"Would that I had a world to lay at her feet. A world is not won in these days—for nothing; nor, its best treasurers, either."

Frank rode on slowly, his thoughts speeding along, as Hawthorne says, like minds do, "in the topsy-turvey commonweath of sleep." He tried to bring himself to stern realities, to their danger at the moment, and peered into the darkness like a person just awakened from sleep in a fear that his dreams would vanish with the dawn.

Archie waited outside the picket line. He stared at Frank as he rode up. "Your eyes are green and yellow and gray, like the eyes of an eagle, in this first glint of morning light. Well, my friend, we made a lucky run of it, and sometimes it is safer to run than fight."

Frank stopped him by throwing up his hand.

"There are no pickets! What can be the matter? And listen, Archie, over there! There is a sound, like the motion of water under a boat!"

They rode into camp safely, with the paper; by that time, there were other sounds that rang out with the stroke of Reveille.



## CHAPTER VI.

"To Arms! To Horse! The frantic cry  
Which startled dreaming birds at dawn;  
And ere the blood-drenched day could die,  
How many a gallant soul had gone."

—*A. R. Noxen.*

The battle of Wilson's Creek, ten miles southwest of Springfield, was one of the bloodiest of the war. It was a contest for Missouri; both sides saw and fought for it. Many young Missourians in the shock of their first battle, awoke to the knowledge that "foemen worthy of their steel" contested their rights, as they saw them.

Marching orders on Springfield were expected, on the morning of August 9th. The pickets were called in, but for some reason, the orders were delayed.

And lo! in the early dawn, "like spectres that come in the night," 20,000 Federals were posted on two sides of them, under Lyon and Siegel, the latter with his guns, over-looking the Southern camp. Lyon had a commanding position on a hill, the day named as "Bloody Ridge."

Totten's guns sent the first advance flying back in a stampede; but the commands were soon posted, and the men assaulting with fiery earnestness. Price was capable and cool, and won that day, the name of a great general. An old Confederate, who talks

eloquently of this battle, said the "new recruits fought like veterans, and Price cheered them on with electric smile. His voice rang above the battle's din, 'It's a tight place, boys, but I will stay to help you!' And again, 'Keep cool, boys, and hold your post a little longer! Pearce is coming with three fresh regiments.' The bullets cut through his clothing, and once he was wounded in the side, but he said not a word till the fight was over."

An eye witness, who saw this battle from a high point on Bloody Ridge, said "the two lines of soldiers, a thousand yards in length, looked like two huge serpents writhing and creeping towards each other. Price waited for Lyon's attack and Lyon's welcome was from Guibor's battery and twelve hundred rifles. Then Price and his men charged heavily and fell back, while the blue line rushed on, steadily and bravely."

Another, a participant in Parson's Brigade, spoke of a brave feat he witnessed. "Once General Price ordered Colonel Gratiot, with five hundred men, to hold a certain position. To reach it, he had to cross a terrific fire from Totten's guns, so fierce that one hundred of his men were slain in thirty minutes. But the position was taken and held stubbornly. General McCullough had dashed across the creek where Siegel had his men posted to cut off Price's retreat; McIntosh and McCullough, with the gallant 3rd Louisiana and Bledsoe's Battery, made quick work

of it, and Siegel's men were soon flying through the woods, leaving artillery and wounded on the ground. The forces concentrated against Lyon, who saw it and rallied his men for a desperate charge, in which he went to his death. The shouts of victory that went up then, were for Missouri and for Price. While we shouted, Colonel Sturgis took command of the Federals, and began the retreat to Springfield."

Lyon's death lost the day, and was a great shock to their cause in the West. He was brave and shrewd, and had not too many nice scruples about a lot of rough Westerners.

In General Price's official report of this battle, he commends the courage of all who fought on our side, and praised especially, many names that will be handed to posterity with love and honor. Many of them achieved deserved fame, and some of them died before the crash of defeat.

But this is a story of the privates, who fought, suffered and died, with a bravery unparalleled, with no guerdon of fame to lure, no hope, only to free the land they loved.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bruce MacGregor and Frank Truman were on the Bloody Ridge, with Archie between them, the blood of a war-like race glowing on his youthful checks.

"You are deliberate in the face of death, Bruce! How I missed it the last time, I cannot see." Frank's-

eyes were blazing, his nerves at highest tension as they waited for the charge.

"I saw a fellow aim right at me," Bruce replied in his even voice. "But somebody picked him off in the instant. He had a red nose, and was a broad target, while I am a high one." He smiled at Archie, reassuringly.

"One fellow!" Archie cried. "I saw a whole company aim at me. They might have been red all over, for all I know."

Frank was watching a soldier who stood grimly alone, his hand up-raised as a signal, his eyes on the crest of the hill. He was wrapped in the aloofness that a few persons can wear in a crowd; Frank had seen and noted this; he stared as the soldier turned, and he recognized Warren King, with red spots in his dark cheeks, and glowing eyes.

Just then Seigel's guns opened on the other side with a roar.

"That 's where hell pops!" exclaimed the familiar voice of Luke Patton, as they turned to a point they had supposed was occupied by the Confederates.

"An old frontiers-man said that of the place where the black lava burst through the fiery rocks of the 'Black Hills', in a story of the West. It is standard for astonishment." Frank said, "So here is the irrepressible Luke again, alive and fighting. It's a grim place to hunt old acquaintances." As he watched

a surgeon bearing an old man past, to a little green spot, on which he was laid to die.

"You will find all sorts here," Bruce replied; his eyes on the yielding thing that had just stood boldly to meet death. "After all, 'the touch of nature that makes the world akin' is barbarism. In a time like this, we burst the veneering of civilization, and the barbarian stands revealed. Are we any better than those born and raised so? It makes me sick for humanity! They say the ichor that pulsed through the veins of the gods, vibrated only to martial music: and was 'bestial and sluggish,' except in scenes of strife and war. I would prefer a warm, even current all the year around."

"I am surprised at so long a speech from Bruce on this occasion," Archie put in drolly, "but a soldier, here,

"Comes not to complain, he only comes to die!"

Bruce had been looking at the doctor attending the old man, who was holding the severed artery while he talked. The surgeon pushed back his hat and raised up at the end. The grass where the old soldier lay, was pure and green no longer.

"Great Scott! Archie, it is Paul Hays! With his great soul in that same little body. I have been watching him tend that old man. We were school-mates at Lexington," he explained to Frank. They

were glad to talk a little, to relieve the vibrant stillness while waiting for the charge of Lyon.

It came, and as Archie said, "right on the heels of his last quotation," the balls crashed through them; Archie's gun dropped, his arm hanging useless; he saw Bruce swept on with the surging ranks that rushed by him, to meet the desperate men coming in Lyon's last charge.

A little while, and Bloody Ridge, "where every step was a dying groan," was left to the victors, and to the ghastly victims of war.

## CHAPTER VII.

"But things like that, you know, must be  
At every famous victory."

—*Southey.*

Bruce hurried back to Archie, placed him in the shade, and asked, "Has anyone seen Dr. Hays?"

"I saw him in the fight," Frank answered, "he went into it till his own work began. Many men would find protection behind that green scarf."

"I seen him," Luke Patton spoke up suddenly, "an hit's a shame! Fur's I can see, sich men'll have to tote the big eend of the beam 'fore this butcherin' thoo with. Jest look at this hill!" He was holding a boy's head on his knee, as he sat on the grass.

"Why, Luke, didn't you expect that when you came to the army?"

He stooped and gently touched the boy's hand on grass.

"No! I didn't! Any body kin fight! But this is h——awful!"

"It is the same with every thing, if you come to think of it," Bruce said slowly; "we enjoy the fun, and live through the trial, but 'the day after' gets us. And 'after the battle' looks tough to us now." He glanced at Archie as he spoke, who was waiting patiently.

"Hit'll be two days 'fore that doctor'll rest any," Luke said again. "An' when ever body was alayin' down to miss that big gun, he cut out thar to fix a bandage on a wounded man, an' skipt back in time for the charge. Yes suh!"

Doctor Hays dressed Archie's shoulder, as he talked away cheerfully. "I have a brother here, who I am looking out for, haven't seen him since the battle. A little fellow, with big, brown eyes, and grit enough for ten men. I'll probably find him up there where those boys are yelling yet. Listen to them! They will know more about fear when they get a thrashing; you may take him home now, Bruce. Your sister will do the rest. I will come and see him, if we stay here. There is somebody's boy dying there, in the shade of that stunted oak. With no brother, nobody near him—but death."

He went to Luke Patton and looked down kindly on the grimy face.

"Your boy?"

"Yes!" with a gulp; he looked up, the whites of his eyes showing grotesquely in his dusty, powder-stained face. "An oh, Lord, how'll I tell his mother?"

"Tell her nothing!" said the doctor. "Only that you are both alive, and will be home soon. It is only a scalp wound, though he may be feverish a little. I will fix him with a few stitches, and the mother can nurse him till the next Federal raid, and she will think Price's army is about the best place for



him. A strange state of affairs, isn't it, out here in old Missouri too. Kinder been surprised into it, haven't we?"

He was through by this, and had father and son encouraged to start on their journey home.

"Suppose we will go to Springfield tomorrow! There will be shouting, then. The town has been under a cloud."

"A cloud of buzzards, that took an' flew nawth to-day!" said the irrepressible Luke. He joined in sociably, in the Doctor's conversation, till they started home.

Archie had amused himself while waiting in this natural hospital, each tree a ward, with the grass for a bed. He said to Frank, as they were going:

"That locality on Finley Creek sends new types, all that I have seen."

Luke put in with animation, "An' he aint seen Mrs. Turner!"

"I am glad if there is another one, may be 'a dearer one,'" Archie said. "My mind has been strung up to awesome things, till I will welcome a little diversion. Any more?"

"Yes," Frank replied, "the 'Sage of the Ozarks' is not to be passed by."

He told Archie about the Sage, of his wonderful powers of description, and forceful repetition, of how he lived on the very top of the long hill, and how he and his wife had climbed up and down to tend the

little crop in the valley below. And how it was said that he praised her work, thereby encouraging her to do the larger share.

Frank accomplished the purpose of his recital so lamely, that Archie said it was like a good many other things in life; where the comical was intended, he could see only the pathetic in the lonely old man's life.

"You will have to see him, to see the comical side," Frank said. "I will take you to see him sometime."

"I should love to go. I hate to see a whole state full of people just alike."

Archie stopped in surprise at a look of astonishment on Luke Patton's face as a soldier came toward them.

"So the dead comes to life on this hill, where every thing else has happened today." He whispered it, then sat in agitated silence as Frank turned to meet Warren King with a warm hand-clasp. The weary face of the latter brightened on meeting his young favorite. As they walked apart, he said:

"So you reached camp safely this morning. Don't take any such risks again; the woods were alive with Federals, and your escape was marvelous."

"Oh!" cried Frank excitedly, "you are the scout! General Price said he had the best scout in South Missouri."

"Ah, said he that?" He leaned on his rifle, looking abstractedly over the hill a minute, then continued.

"From the bluecoats who chased you last night, I overheard enough of Lyon's plans, if I had had time. They ran me into a cave; I defended myself so liberally, they must have thought I had a regiment in there; they kept me until it was too late to reach the camp before morning, or I could have saved many of these gallant lives.

"You see, it was not an ordinary case of the scout's failure to report. God knows, I counted my life as nothing. It was the striking coincidences which the devil's agency can sometimes bring about. There was I, hemmed in an infernal hole in the ground, with the news of Lyon's movements to carry; it seemed the last moment of time with me, and that unaccountable order to have the pickets called in at 12 o'clock, and Lyon and Siegel closing in upon them by dawn. It was a wonderful skill and bravery that could accomplish a victory in the face of all this. I went into that battle like a man who is mad.— I longed to lose consciousness of the bitter humiliation that was burning through me!" His straight form swayed as he walked, and his eyes blazed with excitement.

"You are over-sensitive, my friend; nobody can blame you for the delay."

"Nobody knows a scout's business to praise or blame. Ours is a work that must go without recognition. It is not that. But if ever grief and remorse and these things that death can leave, are tearing you.

with fierce talons that go right to the heart, and you try to drown it in some petty danger that can only hurt the body, it will not soothe your self-contempt to miss a chance to do great good to others." Then after a pause, "I must have an interview with General Price; how brave and strong he is; so true and just, that he will throw no blame, for that would be a firebrand in the ranks."

As they walked back to rejoin their friends, King looked over the battle-ground, at the men at work with the wounded, down the slow decline of the hill to the sluggish little creek at the bottom.

"I wonder if it is ashamed of the red streaks that circle through its waters? The blood, may be, 'Of man by brother slain.' It will ramble on for awhile, then fall into the steeper banks and swifter channel that the James has cut for its mad, crooked course, as it rushes, in turn, into the madder, crookeder waters of White river. And the crimson tide will be washed out, and forgetfulness comes to all." Baring his head an instant, "and God lets the sweet sunshine fall on the just and the unjust."

\* \* \* \* \*

Bruce and Archie pressed the scout to go home with them, as Frank was going; he promised to come to them in a day or two. Archie told Luke Patton they would do all they could for his boy, if they would go too; Luke would not go, but the simple kindness won a stanch friend for the MacGregors.

"What a strange man that scout is," said Bruce, after they started, "he impresses one like a flash of lightning."

"He is truly a mystery," Frank answered, and he told them as they walked along, what he knew of the hermit and his life.

\* \* \* \* \*

All that morning the MacGregors listened to the roar of the cannon, with the pain the sound carried to many good homes. They were so plainly unhappy that Monk slipped out and got his fiddle, a generous thing for him, as he rarely played to any audience except the birds. He could not bear gloom or sadness, and was shocked when the MacGregor told him "to be off with the fiddle!"

"Never mind, Monk," Helen said to him kindly, "your master is nervous! We hope you may play to-night for the boys, if God spares them to come home."

Aunt Dilsie, coming in just then, caught him grinning, and muttered, "Whenever Miss Helen makes reeligious illusions, it calls that belicious grin to that imp's face; an' he's one of dem people that can flop right over to the devil with one flop, de minit de good eye lets him loose. Taint nuthin' but the devil nuther." She had come to see if she could do something for Faith, for Faith's troubles were hers, and had been since she had taken charge of the motherless baby nineteen years ago. But Faith had gone to

walk off her suspense in the forest in front of the house; a half mile away she stopped and waited to listen to Monk's violin; it seemed that the poor negro's soul went out to another world, as the strange music rose, wild and jubilant, full of fierce passion and hope and power; then melted into a low wailing that died away in despair; the very woods were filled with his wild unrest.

Three weary soldiers heard the music as they came over the hills. The breezy notes of the bobolink, and the fuller refrain of the mocking-bird.

"Listen, Bruce!"

"It is like entering heaven, after our morning's work," Bruce observed as they sat down in the shade to listen; he looked back at the fine woodland they had crossed, and out to the open, higher ground surrounding their home. "It is heaven, to live away from the hate of man, in these cool shades."

They watched the sun as it glimmered while sinking over, little

"Spaces of silence swept with song."

"I am going to ask the MacGregor to build me a house over there," Bruce rambled on; "among the grand old oaks, and I'll build a wall around it, through which none can enter without the open sesame I will furnish my friends, my very few."

"Oh, pshaw! Bruce, you have let the battle prey

on your morals. You should be jubilant, thankful and happy. I am, even with this" (he touched the wounded shoulder lightly). "It was horrible, the first thought that was stung into me, till I realized that I was alive. I haven't minded since; it seems only natural and right that I should suffer this wound,—some other poor fellow might have caught it in the heart. But I have never calculated to get killed in this. Still, my Bruce," turning his bright face on his brother, "whatever you want, you are to have. Though, when the bleak, wintry days come, you will want somebody's soul to come to yours in the shadows."

"Well, they will see us, when we get to the rise of the hill."

Frank looked interested. "Then you are at home! Who is it playing?"

"Only Monk! Poor fellow! They are wild with anxiety at the house, and father in too stern a mood to stand any nonsense. When things are so shaped. Monk likes to get out and break in a wild horse or two. If there is no mischief outside, he goes off to the woods with his fiddle. Has just learned it so, doesn't know a note in music. Aunt Dilsie says he is a conjurer; I do believe he tries to call up Sprites and Brownies with his wild strains. He has heard us read Scott till he imagines the forest elves belong to the family traditions. Monk looks to other people like a freak; yet he has the soundest mind, with

a sense of honor that would put many white men to shame."

Faith had seen them as they were slipping up on Monk, and was running toward them. Archie concluded with, "And yonder is Titania!"

Monk forgot his acting for one surprised moment, and tossed his cap with a yell. But that inscrutable mask of a face was calmly courteous when they met. Faith had a little cry over Archie's bandaged arm; then turned to Frank with the tears still on her long lashes, with a result that was demoralizing to that stalwart soldier. He began to stammer an apology for their battle-stained appearance, in sheer confusion.

"You are more welcome than plumed knights," with a charming smile that brought bewildering dimples; "and now I am going to march you up to the MacGregor."

Monk raised his fiddle dramatically. And thus they marched up the long lawn, the violin fairly shrieking the jubilee strains of the "Soldier's Return."

In a confidential talk with Tilde that evening, as they sat over the kitchen fire, Monk said, "I seen how it was with that tall young Truman; I had to go out last night to stand guard when they were here, but I got to the bottom of it in no time today, an' I come down three steps at a time, too. He didn't have to quit all that business (jerking his thumb in the direction of Springfield) to bring Archie home;



Mars Bruce could have brought him. I was so put out with the general gloom today, their coming caught me on the rebound, as it were (his eyes narrowed in a side glance to see if Tilde caught the fine sentence) and when we marched up to meet the MacGregor, so proud, I was surprised at my own powers of enjoyment."

"I believe you!" came Aunt Dilsie's voice from a dark corner, so suddenly that Monk jumped. "It takes big things to stir you to enjoyment! When ole Miss Ciswell died, you was glad! Jes' to have somthin' goin' on! It's all right to be glad over the boys today, but it's all wrong to think fun an' dancin' an' 'joyment's got to go on the whole endurin' time! It's a wrong sperrit in you! Kase it don't b'long nachully to this worl'! Specially whar the dead be. May be you don' know that the sperrit hovers round the body of the dead befo' it leaves the yeath; I do. an' if one of 'em should see that mockin', s'castic smile of yourn, it would sho' follow you an' hant you too!"

"Shut up!" Monk thundered wrathfully. "I had rather live with the devil! Always croaking of death and spirits! Keep death away from you! Fight it as a thing of evil, and you can keep it away! Enjoy the good things of this world like a human! You are just beckonin' death to the house, the way you talk!"

Aunt Dilsie was unmoved at his rage. She peered

at him in the dim light, with many wrinkles radiating from her tightly closed mouth.

"Taint fur the likes of you to interfere with Providence, nor me nother!"

Monk raised her to stronger emphasis, with a look: and she straightened her tall form and said with outstretched finger, "I'm jes' as sho' to have my golden harp, as they have 'em. I have done my duty by ever body! I done it in slave-times of old, to master an' all. An' when a slave kin say that, it means somthin', let me tell you! I don't git mad at nobody but you,—you nigger, you—an' I pray ever night to be forgive; when I know I'm goin' to git mad at you the nex' day, I pray the harder!"

Monk grinned at this, and said calmly, "Aunt Dilse, when you are in a bad way you cut and clip your words awfully! It's bad enough to be a nigger, without throwing it in the teeth of the Lord ever day, to make it look to him as if you felt his handy-work to be onery, or at least, one-sided; now," with his grandest air, "I talk like a white man."

Monk left her in a rage, and went to Tilde, who had thrown her apron over her head against such distressing topics; Monk pulled it off, holding a clump of hair plaits with it, saying, "Come on, Tilde, let's take some fruit in the parlor, I've got to get in there somehow."

## CHAPTER VIII.

"Ef you fool wid ole satan you'll git took in,  
You'll hang on de aidge en git shook in,  
Ef you kep on a stoppin' en a lookin'."

—*Joel Chandler Harris.*

The reunion at the MacGregors lasted a month, a time of delight to Frank Truman, who was surprised at his capacity for nursing; the ragged wound on Archie's shoulder healed slowly, and Frank had to keep him quiet. Archie needed him so much that he had only run down to Christian county once in that time. He and Bruce reported for duty while the army was in Springfield, but Frank managed to spend most of his time at Branksome; he was an ideal soldier and comrade, popular in camp, and the most joyous in the social life with the MacGregors.

John Winstead was with his regiment at Springfield; when he came, the MacGregor's circle was complete. He brought a nephew who had been in the U. S. Army, and resigned when the war broke out to join the South. St. John Winstead brought his military "airs and graces" into the lively party at Branksome, making light of their kind solicitude over a flesh wound in his wrist, received at Wilson's Creek. His black eyes, underneath drooping lids, soon began to take in the new surroundings with gleams of amusement. It pleased him to make a

study of Bruce, a type of manhood that was new to him. Frank Truman was another, both indigenous to the country, he decided. Archie filled him with delight. The MacGregor interested and puzzled him. A Scottish Baron holding his own in Missouri wilds, in a fantastic masquerade. The light about him, that shone so evenly, seemed the reflex of another light, that had thrown a mighty shadow over some curtain swaying in his front; and the shadows had motions and outlines like those of his host; it seemed a dream that always recalled Aidan's daring raids to hold the Scottish border, or gallant Bruce fighting for the throne. He fell to watching that strong face, at once magnetic and inscrutable, and he decided that his light sarcasms at men and things was the safety-valve for the fire that must burn with life. It was no wonder the whole household was electric. And the two sisters made him wonder on the possibilities of Branksome, if there was no war, and if one would leave the world behind in the perfect summer-time. One was a beauty with the smouldering fire that baffled—a family trait—married, but no matter, she was interesting. The other,—he caught himself sitting erectly, with eyes wide open.

Mrs. Gray had dressed the wound on his wrist usually. One day Faith attended to it; he noticed at once that her hands were not so soft or white as Helen's, but he liked her hold on his wrist,

and prolonged the operation as much as possible, because Frank's eyes were bent on every motion of her fingers. St. John saw this from under his lowered lids, and said at once, "Now, Miss MacGregor, will you kindly loosen the bandage just a little, right here? I am so sorry to trouble you, but I can't use my hand; how deftly you manage it, I do not wonder that Archie is so happy with his nurse."

"Archie is always happy," Faith had rejoined calmly. He settled back and amused himself with a study of her unruffled manner, but said to himself "This is dangerous! If I could go as crazy as that long-legged Truman, I am hunting a way." Then he yawned with a great show of being bored, and got up to ask Faith to go for a walk.

They were on the porch later, when Monk came in and said to the MacGregor, "A man wants to borrow a hoe, sir!"

"A man! Can't you tell his name?"

"Not very easy, sir!"

"How now, sirrah! Who wants that hoe?"

"Mr. Stringfellow!"

"Stringfellow, is it? What's his other name?"

"Ebenezer, sir, Ebenezer T. Stringfellow," with great dignity.

"What's the T for?"

"Ticonderoga," his eyes turned narrowly to see if the visitors were entertained. The MacGregor's face was a study.

"Does he want anything else?"

"Wanted to know if you didn't have lots of company."

"Aha!" exclaimed the MacGregor hotly, "so the wind sets in that quarter! You go tell him to go to the devil!"

Monk turned solemnly, "And take the hoe with him, sir?"

"Yes, if he needs it there."

Monk left the laughing crowd to deliver the message, stopping on the way to have a little spell of laughter when he had turned his back. But Archie, from his couch on the porch, said it showed clear through.

As the lank figure of Mr. Stringfellow passed out to the gate, the MacGregor said, "Like Hood's Peter Schlemill, he has clearly 'bargained off his substance for his shadow, but I will tell you, boys, we don't want many such shadows around just now. I heard they were poor, and sent them stuff to eat; didn't know his name; think Monk named him, in fact." After serious reflection, "Nature sets its mark on every living man, and I'll be damned if he ain't too ugly to be honest!"

"The Federals know every family that furnishes a man to the Southern army; somebody tells them; I don't believe my niggers would report what we do here, and—I would like to know that fellow's politics."

"I can tell you, sir!" said Monk, coming round the corner suddenly.

"Where have you been?" asked the MacGregor dryly.

"I walked down to the gate behind that hoe." His teeth gleaming.

"Well," laughing heartily, "what of his politics?"

"In the first place, sir, he's a yankee, and then," (striking an attitude,) "'He hath a lean and hungry look.' Let me have men around me that are fat."

"You are quite an artist, Monk, but, these boys wants some horses now." As Monk went off, the MacGregor told of asking him once how he got around Dilse to get some information he wanted of her; and he said he played Falstaff and made gallant speeches to her; on closer questioning, he admitted that he called her a lady, and when she threw up her hands in protest, he quoted, "Let the court of France show me such another!"

The Colonel roared.

Mrs. Gray joined the group on the porch, and found one soldier missing, and another watching absently for the gleam of a white dress flitting across the lawn with the absentee. They sauntered up the walk, and young Winstead's air was devotional in its gallantry. Frank was noting his fine uniform, and Mrs. Gray was observing his unusual quiet. That afternoon she took occasion to say to her sister, "That young Truman really enjoys the war; he is

like a creature let loose; he is an anomaly, with that Byronic head on him.'

Faith replied gently, "Not all Byronic, his mouth is fine and gentle like—Ben Franklin's."

Mrs. Gray hazarded another shot, "If he had the polish of St. John Winstead, he would be quite distingue."

"It is not a lack of polish, exactly, they are—just different." And Faith turned to give Tilde some orders in the same even tone.

"I believe," concluded Mrs. Gray indifferently, "after all, it is his neck, or, rather, the way his head is set on it." If Faith had any opinions about his neck, she kept them to herself.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mr. Gray came out from Springfield, and brought the scout of whom they had heard so much. Mr. King and the MacGregor formed a sudden friendship after a long talk they had the first day. One day they were discussing the proclamation issued by General Price with the general promises of protection he had given to all citizens who had not taken up arms against the state. "It is like him," Bruce said warmly. "he is a great man because he is a just one."

"But is it the best policy," inquired Colonel Winstead, "to be so good? These same Union men, who accept this protection, will report every move of their Southern neighbors to the next feds that come along, and they will shoot them for aiding the rebel-



lion, if their sons but come to see them. It will be worse after Wilson's Creek, for the people around here."

"What would you have him do, in case we can't stay here?" asked Bruce.

"God knows," replied the Col, "if the Confederates can't bank men enough in here to take the state by storm. People would come out then and take a stand, who now hesitate between two fires. It all depends on how much Davis and Lee can accomplish, and how many men they can spare for Missouri."

"There was a time," said Frank, "when Caesar could not carry on his war against the Britons, because the pagans were pouring down on Rome, and they had all they could do at home! If the Confederacy is so hampered, we will have to devise means to get out of a tight place; we won't turn back now, and can't, if we wanted to," he concluded with a smile.

The MacGregor nodded approvingly. "I was thinking, while you talked, of how the Duke of Marlborough fitted into his time; it is only fair to tell you though that my impressions of him are from Thackeray; I like his trenchant pen, that brings his characters before you with the reality of history, but still clothed with the glamour of romance. This great duke, he says, 'was cold before a monarch's court, bold before the flames of an enemy's guns, and resolute as fate if it served his ends to lie. The officers said the Prince of Savoy would shriek and

rush on the battlefield in frenzy, while Marlborough was as calm as he would be at court. There was no fear in him, no love or pity; he never wasted a moment in regrets and robbed or cheated without remorse. He would smile, weep or stab to gain his will, and he used all men as tools to compass his schemes. The splendid calm of his face sent his soldiers to victory and his army was called invincible.’”

When the MacGregor talked, people listened. In the silence that followed, Bruce looked at his father steadily, then asked: “Can we only hope for success through such questionable measures?”

“We certainly hope for success,” his father answered, and his mouth closed grimly for a second. “And this wonderful duke won it because he overcame what stood in his way. I was opposed, at first to secession, I thought our Southern friends didn’t realize what it meant, especially what it meant to the middle states in case of war; now it has been forced on us, and we could not, in conscience, oppose the South; but I tell you,” and he brought his fist down on the table with emphasis, “before I would suffer failure now, I would put men at the head who would gain it. Marlborough had no heart to soften his iron will—Our generals are not of his kind!”

“Else have we lived in vain through all these years,” Bruce said slowly.

“We will see,” added MacGregor, “I was only giving you a man of his time through the eyes of an

artist. Somebody called him a man for great days; and such a time stares us in the face. Gen. Price is a man for all the time, as Lamartine said of another as brave and good. Yet I tell you, Missouri is clearly in for it. The Mississippi Valley will make the grave-yard. In the face of it, we must go together; our sympathies are with the South. Yet we should have staid in the Union—all the states, I mean,—and struggled along for the rights we would have gained in time; the 'Old Flag' should cover and protect us all. We had no voice in the matter of secession, yet I know we must have men to pilot us through the whirlpool it has raised."

The scout waved his hand toward his host, and held it up dogmatically, as he began, "I think you mistake our men; our strait is not the lack of officers. We exaggerate our abilities, and under-estimate our enemies. Whatever name you may give to their political madness, we cannot doubt the fervor with which they aim to whip us back into the Union. No cunning can save us, no vandalism can be thought of. If Price allows his soldiers to plunder and prey on Union citizens, they will leave your state in ruins! Before the Christian mode of warfare adopted by the South, Federal officers will command like gentlemen. The great hearts that pulse through the South as one, must go on, with the spirit that dares to assail, as one man to two! The boys would have no faith in a Marlborough! A great general bent vast armies to

his will through love and trust! Before a battle he said to them simply: "Soldiers! I am in the midst of you! You are the vanguard of a great people! You must not return to France unless you return under triumphal arches." Price said to the boys at Wilson's Creek: "I am with you, boys!" and they trusted him to victory.

The MacGregor looked at him steadily, without a word; St. John watched him so intently, the other turned and met his gaze.

Col. Winstead covered the instant's silence by turning to Bruce with mirthful eyes, saying: "I asked Monk what he would do in such and such a case if he had charge of a campaign, and he said he would fight the devil with fire, and you know your father and Monk think alike."

"Poor Monk," Bruce replied, "he would give his soul to go to the army, but he is too loyal to desert the house of MacGregor; such faith I have never seen."

\* \* \* \* \*

If the family seem too fond of quotations, it must be remembered that it was a time rich in quotable authors. Dickens, Thackeray, Hugo, Emerson, George Eliot, Whittier, Tennyson, Longfellow and Taylor. were all new and irresistible. It took some time for the Thackeray fever to spread from the coast to Missouri. It was said in New York papers that Henry Esmond created such a sensation, that widows got to

be all the rage; but no such untenable position ever assailed the rural districts of the West; not that the stern dispensers of social laws were altogether unreasonable. They had not the dense superstition, for instance, of certain tribes in India, who demanded the immolation of the widow on the funeral pyre of her husband; they only asked her to put on a cap and "live in a hole"; a favorite metaphor for a life that precluded social pleasures; they usually went in, as expected, except now and then a rebel, young and daring. To this class belonged our Mrs. Turner, a cap would not set on her psyche, and she positively refused to go into any hole.

## CHAPTER IX.

**"In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;  
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed."**

*—Scott.*

Frank was skillful in catching opportunities; the old Virgin's Bower, by the gate, had twined around the arch, or rambled its own wild way for a score of years; today the truant vines needed tying.

"I wonder," said Faith, holding a long, green spray against her white neck, "what you can tell me of the Scout's daughter?"

"The Scout's daughter?" Frank replied, absently, marking the effect of the green spray so highly honored.

"Didn't you know? She came to Springfield recently, it seems. The Scout thinks the army will leave there at once and dislikes to leave his daughter alone. Of course father invited her to stay with us. Her mother died recently, I think. I will be glad to have her, if she is nice."

"And the army goes soon, you say?"

"Yes. Mr. King says Fremont is massing more men on South Missouri than Price can meet. I am so distressed about Archie; he will require nursing for weeks, but he only laughs at my solicitude. I am afraid your triumph will be your undoing, and I am

sorry to see you so confident. Why are you so silent? I had depended on you, so ready always to find a way," in a tone of reproach.

"I was thinking of you, that you would be left to the mercy of such an army as they choose to send. It is out of reason to suppose the MacGregor will be left undisturbed. I think we will have to leave Archie; we may be able to communicate through the Scout. If Archie's safety requires that he should leave home, see to it in time; you must send him to my mother; the village is an obscure little place that nobody would hunt. I will come for him, if possible. Will you remember, and let me know?"

"I will remember; I can't tell you how grateful I am. You are so good."

She regarded him with pleased interest; Frank imagined her look separated him somehow from the action which touched her, abstractedly. He had thought her eyes were too cold, as if the piquant vivacity of manner only touched her mouth, with its ever bewildering dimples. With a courage born of wider experience, he held her gaze tentatively.

"You will have this new friend, 'if she is nice.' Will you—think sometimes—of an older one?"

"One who is three days older?" she asked, archly.

"Oh!" he rejoined in dejected tone. "Does it appear that way to you? I have lived years since I first saw you!"

"Sorry time has dragged so"; with a gay laugh, "I will not forget the older one, if he is nice, too."

He had waited a long time for a vine she held, which she was twisting absently. She handed it up to him, deciding that his gray eyes, with that earnest, downward gaze, were too handsome to fool with.

"You have mangled and killed it; I wonder if you would twist a heart so and stand over it with dimpling face, while it was breaking?"

She turned away from his serious face and saw her diversion at hand.

"Why, who can that be?" she exclaimed, smiling.

Frank broke away from the spell that held him. It seemed as if he were trying to come back from somewhere; when Faith was standing there stiffly, her eyes mischievous, wondering, still bent on the road. Turning, he beheld Mrs. Turner, on her little, clean-limbed active soot, coming swiftly toward them. She was so near he whispered her name to Faith, as he went to meet her.

Mrs. Turner was thirty-five, with good features, and the clear white skin sometimes seen with black eyes and hair. Her heavy, black hair rested in a great twist on her neck, and her bonnet, above it, was claiming all of Faith's attention. It was a good straw (leghorn), between a shaker and the bonnet worn by Mormon women a few years before that time. It flared a little with rounded corners, and lining and strings were of a pretty lavender; the short 'frill' of



the same, rippled over the coil of her hair charmingly. Her black habit, rather worn, 'set well,' as it was good, homespun cloth to begin with.

Faith thought Frank's neighbor very picturesque, as she went to meet her.

"I seen your mother yistiddy," Mrs. Turner said as they walked to the house; "everybody was in a stew over the news of a battle, till Luke Patton come with John, an' told us where you was. Charity Beale, over here a little ways, was Sterner's cousin, an' she's been wantin' me to visit her for some time. So I just up an' come, so's to be where somethin's going on."

Her eyes taking in Miss Faith's grace and dimples as she talked.

Mrs. Turner fairly beamed over her new acquaintances and their pleasant surroundings; her eyes busily noting the soft fall of every curtain.

The air of refinement was charming, and she settled herself in a cushioned chair as if she had found something lost from her life. She stood Helen Gray's quiet scrutiny coolly, and rocked in comfort.

"Beats anything on Finley Creek," she whispered to Frank, knowingly, and she flashed shrewdly at what was holding Mr. Frank there so long; she decided at once that it was a place for situations, and she never remembered Charity Beale for two days.

St. John Winstead opened his eyes on hearing her say: "Sterner," then he sat down beside her and drew

her out so adroitly yet so agreeably that he was soon in possession of the history of "Finley settlement," and he knew of startling things she had said to Sterner. He said very confidently: "Of course you will stay awhile at Branksome and have a good time. The MacGregor is a widower, still handsome and hearty; Col. Winstead is a bachelor and dead to marry; if they are too old, here are four young men, all charming, and Mr. Gray,"

"But he is married," she interrupted.

"All the better for a flirtation," he began, but he had to beat a retreat before her astonished silence, and the others joined them.

The MacGregor showed friendly interest when he found she had come from Virginia and Mrs. Terner was full of reminiscences.

"We lived on a spur of the Alleghany mountains, an' you've got to live such a life to reelize its lonesomeness. When we went to housekeepin' Sterner cut the logs for the house an' rolled 'em down the hills; I helped him sometimes. Why, we wouldn't see a human bein' for days at a time."

"But it must have been lovely up there," Faith said to her, "with the beautiful hills around you, and, you had the birds always?"

"I didn't keer for birds, I wanted serciety. I wanted to get where it wouldn't take all day to clime down one hill an' up another to see a nabur; so I up an' tole Sterner that we had to go to the valley."

"Like the 'Mad River' in the White mountains," St. John put in smilingly. She let her black eyes rest on him an instant, then went on, "It was harder to get out than to stay there, for anybody but me. Well, we found the land high in the valley, and jined a colony of immigrants comin' to Missouri. We stopped in Cyarter county and happened to hear that Judge Fallon had lost his wife, and wanted a overseer an' housekeeper. I waded through dirt into that kitchen, an' put them niggers to work right an' left! We had good times, I tell you, an' saved enough money to buy a farm of government land time the Judge married again. We'd have been two cabbage heads if we'd staid up on them hills in old Virginny."

"And you never could have cut any figure in society," St. John observed, almost with reverence. Faith interposed to shield her from such raillery, just as Monk opened the door with a flourish, to announce Mr. and Miss King. Miss King was in black, tall, with dark hair and eyes, nose a trifle large, and her face a little severe in profile.

She met Frank with a smile. "My father has told me you were his friend in the castle; though everyone is kind to a stranger down here." Turning to Faith, "I felt that my father might be presuming in bringing me here."

"It isn't as if we lived in ordinary times, you know; one friend must help another now."

Miss King felt an instant trust in Faith's violet

eyes, and sat quietly, while she watched with interest the play of Helen's black ones, as she joined in St. John's banter on one side, and responded in some satisfying way to her husband, calmly devoted on the other. Miss King decided in the short interval before dinner that life in the country might prove gayer than she had expected.

Some one proposed a stroll over the grounds a few days later. Archie got up with a grimace, "I am going, if I may have somebody's arm, Frank?" as he saw St. John start to Faith. Bruce walked with Miss King, and Archie's maneuver left Mrs. Turner to Col. Winstaed, who was very red in the face, but rose gallantly to the occasion. At the foot of the long sloping lawn they stopped to admire the orchard, gorgeous in its wealth of red and golden fruit with heavy bending boughs; beyond it, woodland pastures and wide fields of tasseled corn met the green hills in the distance.

The Scout looked over them all, then back at the quaint, gabled house. "You had hoped to enjoy all this in your old age, but you know the German proverb, 'When destiny rains down upon thee all thy wishes, and thy happiness seems unbounded, then is the time to fear.'"

Miss King turned her eyes away, and would not meet his look. The MacGregor looked at Archie, who laughed at their serious faces; as he said, "I wonder when we will all meet again? The Scout's proverb

recalled the three witches." Aside to Frank, "Can't we start Mrs. Turner? See how helpless the Colonel looks! Oh! I have it," raising his voice, "let us all go and pay Aunt Dilse a visit in her cabin; she entertains royally if she thinks it worth her while."

Aunt Dilse's cabin was near the house; the cook's was close by, with a dining room for the field hands. She gave out supplies for every meal, and ruled every nigger with iron hand. Nobody knew her age. Monk said she was growing childish in streaks; she had to guard against any parade of her fancies; an old, no-account nigger was told to stay at the cabins, so she kept age at bay through mere "entergy of will." She was on her porch, concealed by thick vines and climbing roses, through which she made observations as the party came in sight. She rose and stood erectly on the green circle in front of the porch. The bandanna handkerchief with which the good, old colored Auntie used to do up her hair, was picturesque and distinctive with her. It was silk, bright plaid and clean, and tied with a fantastic grace that brought out her dark, strong face, and formed a crown for her well-poised head. She stood calmly, but she was indulging in fierce soliloquy. "So that young Sin, John, is with my Faith, an' he's bin passin' by with no more notice than if I was a daug. Humph! lettin' on to belong to the aristock, too! I'll show him!"

Faith came forward first and stood by her as the

others came up, saying kindly, "Aunt Dilse, I want you to see my new friends."

She made her courtesy to each one with grave politeness. The Scout complimented her flowers and the care she took of her cabin.

"Of course," Faith told him, "she stays at the house or goes and comes when she pleases."

"Aunt Dilse," Colonel Winstead said, laughing, "I should hate to see some Yankee carry you off from here; Faith could not do without you."

"Nothing but death can separate me from Miss Faith," she replied. "No Yankee cin take me away 'thout they take her."

"I wouldn't be the Yankee that would try to take either of you," rejoined the colonel; and Archie cried gaily, "I would rather have the brown dwarf who brought such woe to the hunter on my crupper than Aunt Dilse if she didn't want to go."

"Please tell us about him," Miss King turned to Archie.

"Not in this red-headed crowd," he said with a laugh. "But isn't there a legend, father, or something to the effect that a horse won't carry the imps of the forest?"

"Yes," the MacGregor answered, seriously. "A dwarf once assumed the shape of a lost child. He was heir to the 'Bold Buccleugh,' and when found, as was supposed, a forester was told to take him home on his crupper. And Scott says:

'Soon as the palfrey felt the weight  
Of that ill-omened, elfish freight,  
He bolted, sprung and reared amain,  
Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor chain.'

"The rider held on till they crossed a stream of running water, that broke the witch-spell, and the dwarf jumped down with his own taunting laugh, and fled to the forest."

Miss King listened with some surprise and admitted to herself that it was an interesting family. Archie said to her, "Dilse can tell fortunes, work all sorts of charms, commune with spirits, call the elves from the woods, and tell more stories of witchcraft that have been with the house of MacGregor for three centuries, than anybody else ever heard of."

Miss King looked around to see if the others were serious, then replied in her soft voice, "I should love to come and make Aunt Dilse a special visit sometime, and hear those romantic stories."

"Nothing easier," Archie assured her, "they are her household gods, she raises them day or night. Aunt Dilse, I have just learned that one of the first offerings to the gods of old was parched meal and corn, it is easy to get at, I want you to try it, and look in the smoke for me with two good arms, it would mean much to me, if you could charm a sudden recovery."

Aunt Dilse smiled indulgently and promised

gravely; she was never offended at Archie's teasing. Then young Winstead spoke to her. "You do look as if you could call up spirits, invoke some prophet who could read your future and ours; can you compass so much? or" with his mocking smile, "have you made a study of—psychomancy?"

She turned and held him one instant with glittering eyes, then said calmly, "I never take any more on my shoulders that I can kick off at my heels, you will have to look out fer yo' self!"

It came drolly to St. John that some writer had said that "Carlyle was not to be killed by an ephigram," so he tried to stand his ground. The MacGregor covered his momentary embarrassment by saying, "It would take a devilish sight of kicking sometimes, Dilse." He saw that she was deeply offended, suspecting that St. John was making fun of her.

Archie heard a slight noise at the end of the porch, and peering through the vines, he saw Monk with his hand pressed tightly over his mouth convulsed with laughter at Dilse's discomfiture. He had slipped around—thinking the house full of visitors—to hear Dilse talk to herself. That, he said, was the best fun of all, even in a place where things happened all the time.

Mrs. Terner found Charity Beale in good time, she had many interesting talks for them, of what she had told Sterner in her eventful life. "I always told



'Sterner, the best he could do, was to let me go; I never was no hand to set around with tettin' an' sich."

If she grew tired of them, she made a second home of Branksome, and once in a while, she made a run of it to the "settlement" on Finley Creek. Cricket, her little sorrel, thought like his mistress, that the forty miles between amounted to nothing.

## CHAPTER X.

"Now what is the secret, serene gray dove,  
Of singing so sweetly alway?  
There are many to-morrows, my love, my love,  
There is only one today."

—*Joaquin Miller.*

As they continued their stroll, St. John said to Faith, "What awful eyes that old darkie has, she makes me feel as if the witches were curling my hair." Under his breath he whispered, like Juliet in trouble too deep for utterance, something like "ancient damnation."

Helen, having succeeded in enticing her husband away for a talk, overheard St. John as they passed them; then she eased her mind by abusing Dilse. "It is too provoking," she said, "about a woman's whims; St. John is interested and such a suitable match for Faith. Rich, handsome and well bred: and she treats him with an indifference that is simply stupid. Even lets Dilse snub him. And what do you think? she said the other day that Frank Truman was just made for a chevalier Bayard!"

"I think she showed good taste," said quiet Mr. Gray, "and you watch him after he has better opportunities."

"Opportunities!" exclaimed his wife, "Faith is not

looking for a man who is hunting for opportunities! fortune has showered them on St. John."

"But, my dear, this is no time to plan such things, the young fellows will both be killed, like as not. Anyway, Faith will do as she likes; you will all be surprised some day at the character behind that dimpling face of hers, the dimples are put there to hide a will, or, what you may please to call it—that she gets from her father; if you cross her much you will find what it is. Let us go to the house. And, my dear, don't puzzle that handsome head of yours over Faith's beaux, but think more of taking care of yourself. I believe you would be safer in Springfield; still, we might be called away;" and, hurrying through it as they walked along. "I have secured property to you that will be safely kept if anything should happen to me, my lawyers will tell you about it, but here we are, with the whole jolly crew."

\* \* \* \* \*

On the lawn, the Scout was saying to the MacGregor, "And your family in Scotland, was the famous Rob Roy an ancestor?"

Faith interrupted them here, to say, as if in warning, "Papa is remorseless when he starts on Scotland," but the Scout's stern eyes merely looked over her and not at her, as he waited for the MacGregor to go on.

"Not an ancestor, a kind of 'cousin red' as Scott would have it. The whole clan suffered outrageous

wrongs from the government. My grandfather said there was a crime imputed to one of the name, and they were scattered and banished in consequence. Though never proven, it was laid to the branch from which Rob Roy sprang. My grandfather's ancestors in Aberdeen were educated gentlemen, having changed their name to Gregory, after the banishment. Grandfather said he would wear the old name, go to a strange country, live and teach his children so to live, that their inheritance of wrong should be wiped from the name."

"It was a noble purpose," interrupted Col. Winstead, "and proved a noble success." The MacGregor thanked him with a look. As he went on, "We have our memories of Scotland and our family legends of course, yet my father was a thorough Virginian, and I am a Missourian, heart and soul. Though remarkably shrewd and thrifty, the Scott is not altogether practical, as their literature will show you, and their romances are written on wild and broken coasts, among the hills and glens, everywhere—in fact, in Scotland."

"Then you have been there?" inquired the Scout.

"Oh yes, I was sent to school in Aberdeen."

"How did you happen to come back?" Bruce asked him.

"You see," said the MacGregor, "he has the fire in his soul, from reading Scott I suspect; though I

believe I have told them a few stories of the clans of MacGregor and Stuarts."

"And the kilted chieftains of Mccaloin More," interrupted Bruce, smiling, "but how could you leave it all?"

"Well, my son, I was coming home, you know, and a blue-eyed fairy in the valley of the Shenandoah was a magnet too. I found her on the bank of a swollen creek, the bridge gone while she looked longingly towards home; she was thirteen and small, I a great big fellow four years older; I carried her over on my shoulder and, in the years that followed I was never content till I won the privilege of carrying the sweetest of jewels around with me, through her brief life."

"And," said Bruce quickly, with grave eyes, the MacGregor concluded gently, "Yes, it was your mother, and Faith has her bonnie, brave eyes."

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At dinner the Scout disturbed the merry party with gloomy news. "We will have to report for duty to-morrow."

Bruce was ready, he said.

"Yes," cried Archie excitedly, "Bruce is always ready, with that large way of his, and here am I with a great swelled arm, to be left behind—where will you go?" but the Scout said nothing of plans or future, and left them soon after, to start on one of his secret and dangerous journeys. \* \* \* \* \*

In the evening Archie proposed that they have some-

thing special for their last evening together; someone suggested tableaux, but no one liked the parts assigned them, so they called on Mr. MacGregor.

"Papa can think of a hundred good things for private theatricals," Faith said, with a sigh, "but we have only one Scottish plaid, and one suit for a knight; the tinsel is peeled off his cross and the buttons tarnished."

"I think," began the MacGregor, "the whole set of you very illiterate or very contrary, and suggestions are difficult. You might try St. John as 'Sir Artegal' and Miss King would make a splendid 'Britomart.'"

St. John answered slowly, "I believe, my dear sir, that I am not up to 'Sir Artegal,'" and Margaret looked relieved.

"Then make an Apollyon of him," the MacGregor spoke up quickly; "a man who would refuse such a queen ought to stand around alone."

Again St. John dissented softly.

"Then try 'Egmont and Clarchen,' Faith would suit that." St. John looked interested, but Faith exclaimed, desperately; "And I am not up to Clarchen, papa." Frank turned with an innocent face, "We can't play at sixes and sevens all night; tell me about Egmont and let us try it," to Faith.

"Or Ivanhoe," from the MacGregor; and Frank appropriated the role coolly. Monk was soon in a maze of delight; though his directions to "get the

things they needed" sounded vague to others; and they began with dressing rooms and rehearsals. Helen brought in a large cloak that would "conceal rather than betray a knight," she said, but Archie called her to come and fix him for a minstrel and find him a scarf. Faith busied herself with a hat and plume. "These will do for a knight," she said, "but there is nothing for Egmont."

Frank looked at her, and in the instant his old, audacious self—that was his before this dream flamed over him—returned; he threw the cloak around him, put on the plumed hat, which he set saucily back on his waving hair; then he sat down, placed a cushion beside his arm chair and said: "You must kneel here, you know."

Faith stood stiffly, a moment, looking down at him blankly; then she knelt, with the air of a child under command, and crossed her hands demurely on the arms of the big chair. "But I don't understand," she said, looking up into his face, "Egmont was Count Egmont, a great man in the Province, a stern judge. a—" she broke off abruptly, her eyes falling before his steady look.

Frank laughed in a tremor of happiness. "But don't you see?"—quoting as best he could under circumstances so exciting—"that Egmont is a stern, cold, unbending Egmont, harrassed with affairs of state, watchful of his foes, distrusting his friends—but this Egmont, Clarchen, is calm, unreserved,

happy in the love of the best of hearts. "This is thy Egmont," he laid his hand on hers, still crossed on his chair-arm, holding them there, while she looked, astonished, into his radiant face an instant, then the blood surged over her cheeks and she tried to free her hands.

"What is it, Clarchen! you said I must change my face, and you have changed it for me; it is such happiness to be near you."

She jumped up swiftly. "I think we will not have Egmont tonight."

"For the public, no! Yet you have your Egmont, yours till you shake him off; and I! had Clara for one happy moment." He saw her eyes falling before his earnest gaze. "What will you do?"

"Get Margaret, and have Ivanhoe to please papa."

He loosed one trembling hand slowly—"Am I to be Ivanhoe?"

"If you wish, as Egmont is impossible."

"I do not know, as to that. Who is to be Rowena? because, I can't do anything any more, without something ahead of me to work to, I had an instant's happiness, a lightning flash that revealed to me the darkness outside, where—no Clara stood."

"Some one is coming," freeing the other hand quickly, "and we have accomplished nothing," snatching up the plumed hat as she went by him to the door. Frank caught his breath. "I think we have accomplished a great deal." He was arranging



his cloak before the glass, when Faith came back with Margaret, who said, "Your hair should hang long and straight below the broad hat, Sir Knight; can't you fix it, Faith?" Frank gave her the brush, sat down solemnly before the mirror and watched her making awkward little dabs at his curling hair. "If you wouldn't be so afraid, as if I were a toad or something; but I'll tell you," with sudden animation, inducing her to raise her eyes to meet his in the glass, "I was intended for another part, a 'Count' for instance."

Faith pretended not to hear. "Now I think you will do, if you will frown darkly."

"What?" with a meaning smile. "Do I have to change my face again?"

Margaret turned to him. "Take yourself off, Sir Knight, while we make beauties of ourselves. I never saw a man so fond of looking in the glass."

Faith called after him, "Monk will fix your gaiters."

Monk was happy in the bustle of preparation that gave a hint of theatricals, and skipped over the house from garret to cellar. He had a pair of leggings adjusted finally over Frank's boots, but condemned their severe plainness with critical eyes. He found a bunch of red braid and crossed it in big squares with a result which he pronounced stunning. He was pleased with Frank's approving smile, while it was really called up by a vision of two white hands crossed over his chair-arm, with long curling lashes

lowered above them; he wondered how she would look as the "Lady Rowena" in the tableau, and he felt a generous pity for the great-souled Rebecca as she turned from the survey of such loveliness to what the world might hold for her. Meantime, he let Monk do with him as he willed, with the result that Ivanhoe, after the glamour of the tableau, showed too much barbaric splendor for the sombre Knight from Palestine.

St. John was especially critical, said Frank looked more like a "Malvolio", and was inclined to be cynical over the whole performance; he propounded a riddle with a grin that was trying to Frank. "Why did the Princess change Sir Beder into a white bird with red legs?"

"No matter," said Frank easily. "He was changed back—and won at last."

The soldiers started next morning, and Frank tried in vain to have a word with Faith; he sought to engage Monk's sympathy, who said loyally, "Yes Sir, this is a dickens of a place to go a courting. sir;" with a narrow line of white teeth gleaming in his silent enjoyment of the situation.

Frank fancied that the MacGregor hovered about Faith needlessly, and he was sure of the open hostility in Mrs. Gray's brilliant eyes.

## CHAPTER XI.

"Oh, not alone on bristling wall,  
The shock and surge of sieges fall!  
And he who peaceful fight has made,  
For those who lean on him for aid,  
As bright as men more earth-renowned,  
In God's unerring eye is crowned."

—*Will Carlton.*

Life in Missouri in the summer of '61 was thrilled with excitement, and the early fall found the state shaken from border to center. General Price, who had presided over the convention in March, and voted against secession, opposing war vehemently, was now the war-horse of Missouri, fighting for the state; he was now in the western counties, driving out the forces of Lane and Montgomery, who had the border in a state of terror.

Another convention was in session at Jefferson City; it had resolved the governor and legislature of Missouri out of office, and proceeded to elect others more in harmony with the Military forces surrounding the city, and guarding the capital; while this unparalleled law-making was in progress, Governor Gamble's first measure was to call for 30,000 men to protect the state, and drive the other governor out, at the same time Price was calling loudly for volunteers to defend it against invaders. Governor Jackson, down in southwest Missouri, called his legislature

together for the purpose of passing a formal act of secession, and fighting to the death the outrages of war for coercion. Men who did not uphold these war measures, were further tempest-tossed during the fall when martial law was declared, as they could not go to the army, and could not stay at home. A man dare not shoulder his gun to go hunting, in fear of the dreaded court-martial; so the women went a hunting, and the game went free; a serious state of affairs, where people were starving. These western people of Missouri had already lived through the horrors of border warfare, during the contest over Kansas; they had fought the "Jay-hawkers" for two years; they had had their citizens murdered, their property stolen because one "John Brown" had different views on slavery from theirs, and desired that Missouri be reconstructed. They saw no hope of life in the troubles thickening around them now, if Price should leave the state to the plunderers who made war a pretext to prey on political opponents. The women on these border households rose grandly to the rescue, as they did throughout the South. They bade their husbands and sons go with Price, and took up the burdens left by them. They learned to spin and weave, made the clothing for their families, plowed, sowed and gathered the crops, sheltered and cared for the poor old horse hidden away during winter, and worked many ways to keep an old cow safe, the main support for suffering little ones. There

was no time to grieve for the precious lives they sent away, perhaps to their death. They placed their trust in God, and hoped, through the Godless years that followed.

They did every thing out there—throughout the state—and all through the South, that proclaimed abilities that developed later into that magnificent unfolding that followed the war, “The New Woman.”

General Price had decided on an effort to relieve the western border, and joined General Rains in time to route a Federal force from Fort Scott, who attacked them at Drywood. Going north Price met the scout, who came like a shadow in the night with news of a raid on Warrensburg, for the purpose of robbing the bank at that place. They had marched all day; foot-sore and weary, they started on another, that would last all night, without a murmur, to find at daybreak, the enemy had gone, and burned the bridge behind them. They were welcomed and feasted at Warrensburg with generous hospitality, and roused from a blissful rest with orders to march on to Lexington; they went gleefully, as many of the boys were going home.

General Price found the Federals in the city, and strongly fortified in the old Masonic College. They met an old man who was bent and feeble with straggling gray whiskers, whom Price questioned closely about the College stronghold; satisfied with the information, he sent men on a bold dash at their pickets.

and stationed his army around them; skirmishing with the out-post till his infantry arrived with the wagons, when the siege began in earnest on the 18th of September.

What a strange September, that of '61, an autumn that hung over the state like a pall! There was a blight upon the land, harder than the frost king's winter breath, a gloom that was bearing it down with woe. And the great, muddy river, swollen and sullen, rushed along by the bloody work; past beautiful homes, stately churches and honored colleges, from whose doors brave men and lovely women had gone forth to adorn the state. The oldest college, a historic center of the time, was fortified against her own people; its lawns bedecked with sentinels, or surging squads of soldiers in blue, surrounded now by the men in gray, disputing their right to be there at all. Blood against blood of neighbor, friend and brother.

For two days the bombardment went on, the days blacker than the nights, for they were bloodier. Colonel Rives made a gallant charge down the river bank to capture a steamboat sent to the Federals assistance, and was fired on from a residence near by. They charged the place, took it, and found it a commanding position to hold; from this house, sharpshooters picked off the men sent down to the river for water from the college. One old man seeming to boldly dare the death he did not fear, carried with his bucket a charmed life, and made the desperate

errand safely; an unerring aim was on him, when another caught his arm, "Stop! it is the old man we saw talking to General Price. What can it mean?"

"It means life to him that you spoke when you did," the strange soldier answered softly as he pushed a plumed hat from his face, his steely eyes bent already on the barrel that dropped the man behind the old water carrier, whose feeble steps had gained the bank that sheltered him, when the old man sprang, with the agility of a cat behind a corner, where he coolly put his whiskers in his pocket, stepped out of the ragged clothes and revealed the keen eyes and soldier bearing of Price's scout, who told them the fort had three or four thousand men, well armed, but apparently very uneasy. The Southern boys told the scout the angels protected him, while the Feds looking from the windows, said the devil got him.

On the 20th, the Confederates found a warehouse of hemp bales, which General Price ordered them to sieze for breast works; sodden with water, they turned the bullets effectively. They pushed them along before them and slowly closed in on the beleagued college. The green campus was reddened with the final battle, in the afternoon, when General Mulligan raised the white flag.

Price's Missourians shouted their satisfaction, and all were jubilant when they found the splendid equipment which the capture would furnish the state troops, who had as yet had nothing in that line but what they

had won. There were seven hundred horses and cavalry outfits, arms for 3,000 infantry, and joyful stores in the commissary department. There were 100 commissioned officers among the prisoners; Price found valuable state papers, and \$900,000 taken from the Lexington bank, which he returned. In his official report of the battle, General Price spoke of it as a signal victory, and praised his boys warmly. They had been victorious in every Missouri battle, and their jubilation at Lexington had in it the hope of an early peace.

"Our boys" had the pleasure of seeing Bledsoe with his battery on the last day, and they saw the brave young Churchill Clark with his Indian friend, and Guibor's Battery was there, a crude outfit that developed with its demand to keep up with its gallant officers, Guibor, Barlow and Kennard, who started as other Missouri boys did, to fight for homes that were endangered, with no thought of other fighting than what was required to protect their state; yet they fought from Carthage to Vicksburg in twenty battles with a record famous in history. The first real gloom settled over them with the news that they were to go and leave Missouri to the hopeless chaos then existing.

In a company next their own, Frank had been watching a young man with a long plume waving jauntily above his golden hair—whose arm he had stayed from shooting the scout—his eyes soft and



drooping as he waited for orders. In a daring charge in the first day's fight, his superb horsemanship won the admiration of all; his eyes flashed along the sharp's rifle, as he singled his victim; at close quarters, his aim was as deadly with the revolver which he used with lightening surety; his boldness was the more defiant for a red jacket that flamed over the field. This was Quantrell, famous already for the desperate skill which won him such notoriety in his daring, wild life afterwards. He had joined the regular army, but left in soon after Lexington for his old haunts around Kansas City, where he preferred to work out the vengeance that had warped his soul.

## CHAPTER XII.

"Who would believe such deeds could find a place,  
As these whose tragic history we retrace?"

—*Longfellow.*

General Price marched south from Lexington, and stopped at Neosho where his Missouri State Guards were organized as Confederate troops. He was grieved that his little band could not hold the river till recruits from North Missouri could reach them. Missourians remember the condition of the state as described in General Price's letter to the C. S. Government. "Pursued by Federal armies to the extreme southwest of the state, without arms, we have won them, and have been successful in five different engagements; we have an army of 12,000 men. Through suffering and destitution, half-fed and half-clothed, these men have bravely given their labors and their lives for the cause of Missouri and the South."

In this condition, on the approach of winter, they were cheerful, patient and ready to assume any hardship, or follow their leader to any battle .

The legislature, in session at Cassville, passed a formal act of secession the last of October, 1861; they had waited in the hope that neutrality in the border states might adjust the difficulties between extreme

factions. Governor Jackson sent the announcement to President Davis, that their fortunes were cast with the Confederacy. He assured the president that differences between the leaders were now adjusted, and that they could protect Missouri with the aid of 25,000 men. General Price urged General Johnston to attack St. Louis, while he attacked Springfield, and thus close in on the Federals between them, at the same time give recruits the chance to join them.

The Confederacy, flushed with the success on many battlefields, and proud of the courage the people exhibited against such odds, still felt secure, and hurled its scorn at an army already beginning to show the cloven hoof beneath the drapery of the Goddess of Liberty. The Southerners had not imagined her a sectional goddess, offering protection to might and gold, but had felt that her justice shone over all. But justice and their views of state's rights were shattered as dreams before the incredible backing of the government to the politicians who hated the South. When President Lincoln decided to play the card his party demanded, the South saw their sunny land, their people, their principles in the scales on one side; on the other, abolitionism; the love of the Union, the pretext that tipped the balance. The Southerners loved the Union too, but loved their state and homes better and honestly sought to save them before oppression, a form of patriotism a century old in our land.

The memory of Lincoln grew afterwards to an admiration of sterling virtues, and Southerners feel to-day that he freed the South when he freed the slaves; but they were tied then with the dead weight of tradition, and this is a chronicle of how the situation appeared to the Missourians in the first year of the war. The Democrats saw in the accidental election of 1860, that they had been too careless with fire; Lincoln was regarded then as a tool in the hands of emancipationists to take their "chestnuts from the coals", these grew hot in the roasting when they decided to overrun Kentucky and Missouri with soldiers to force them to stay in the Union. Virginia was already one vast battlefield. It was the saddest of war's iconoclasms, to tear down what grand old Virginia had built up. Think of a state ostracised from its government, that her incomparable sons had ruled as statesmen, patriots, judges or soldiers for a hundred years.

Their fight was gallant, if all in vain. The indignation that leaped over these middle states at thought of coercion, was sudden and lurid; not at all akin to the systematic state craft that had things ready; that had inserted its wedge, forty years before, in the heat of the "Missouri Compromise," and driven it home when the new party, created to strike the South through slavery, was strong enough to enforce the laws they chose to make for all.

To add to the dangers and discomforts of South-

ern residents, bands of guerrillas were springing up all over the state. They would go to a house and order food, under pretense of being Southern soldiers, if the owners were Southern; if they were Union people, they claimed the right to rob the enemy; and carried off horses or anything they fancied. As these atrocities were laid to the Southern army, the Federals followed and wreaked their vengeance on the citizens for "aiding the rebellion." They arrested peaceable men, sent them off to jail, and in many cases, they were carried off, and never returned. Many a good wife or mother clung to their faith in God, and waited, hoping the husband or son might be exchanged as a prisoner of war when the strife ended; sometimes their bodies were found and buried by stranger, Christian hands; sometimes the lonely deep forest kept their death vigils. The desolate crags of the Ozarks looked down on many a crime committed for personal or political enmity that war could not excuse.

\* \* \* \* \*

One evening two soldiers in blue rode up to Branksome, and asked for the lady of the house. Faith sent Dilse out to them; she was greeted with oaths and derisive laughter and told to hunt Miss MacGregor. When Faith came out on the porch, two splendid black horses had their front feet on the steps, the riders eyeing her closely as she stood in the doorway. One said gruffly, "We want supper for thirty

men at once, can we get it?" His question a command.

"It is not convenient for us to feed thirty men to-night," she replied.

"No doubt," said the soldier coolly, "we are not worrying over your convenience as much as our hunger. We want it all the same, a good supper too, we want chicken." And they turned to meet the others coming in sight.

Faith went up stairs to hide some letters from the boys; and met Monk as she went down, coming to warn her. "Don't you say nothin', Miss Faith, to make trouble. They aint no Feds. It's Captain Jackson with his bush-whackers.

Faith walked into the sitting room, where she found a motley crowd around the fire, dressed in every style, from handsome uniforms, blue and gray, to the ragged jeans of the farmers. She addressed a tall fellow with a long, black plume in his hat, "So you are Captain Jackson, are you?"

Greatly surprised, he stammered assent.

"Do you know how much trouble you are making for us tonight?"

"I hope not, 'pon my soul," replied the soldier. "We have had hard luck today; got after some militia, and chased them for ten miles; we are starving, and adopted the little ruse to make you afraid to refuse the Feds, though our friends usually feed us willingly."

"They are ignorant of the danger you are leading us into; the Union soldiers follow such bands as yours with robbery, fire and death. Why don't you join the regular army if you wish to fight?"

He gazed at her in silence for a moment, while another soldier whistled softly, "Whew! she aint afraid to talk, is she?"

Faith went on, "My father's life is endangered by this ruse, as you term it; my brother is home recovering from a wound; the soldiers in Springfield will come out here, accuse us of feeding rebels and aiding the Confederacy; of course we don't look at it that way,"—his dark face flushed at her fine irony—"but the results will be the same for us. And now I want to tell you, I am in charge here, and I do not want this repeated."

Monk addressed the puzzled captain, and told him supper was waiting.

The MacGregor approved Faith's courage when he returned; he had heard of sickening horrors north of the river, from the same cause.

The next morning Faith and Margaret rode over to see a destitute family a few miles away; the husband in the army, the last cow confiscated by the soldiers, and the wife as helpless as the three small children. When they came out, they met a large company of blue-coated soldiers, "the real thing, this time," Faith whispered as they mounted their horses.

A dark, heavy set man motioned her to stop. "Where have you been?"

The blood rushed to her face, "Suppose I do not acknowledge your authority to question me!"

The officer said coolly, "I will give you a lesson in one of my modes of exterminating rebels."

"Can't you find the Southern army, or do you try your modes on women and children, in order to give them in smaller doses?"

He scowled as he answered, "When we suppress them, with their impudence, the rebellion is half conquered."

"You are not capable of understanding a Southern woman's love for her country," she said contemptuously. "Let me pass please."

"Not so fast, Ma'am, I meet a rebel coming out from a hole where the man is gone to the Southern army, and I—"

Faith interrupted him. "How did you know, are you the one who took the cow?"

"D——m the cow," he said angrily, as Faith let go the bridle and her horse plunged past them. A slight fair man, at the officer's elbow, waived his hand. "Let them go, captain, it will do no good to detain them."

For answer the Captain wheeled his horse and rode after them.

"Oh! Faith, how could you?" Margaret exclaimed as they rode away. "My heart was just thumping,



so I couldn't have said a word. You are very handsome when excited, and, 'very gently', for that very reason I wish you may not have many such encounters."

"You are always sweet and good, Margaret, and always right; I would like to grit my teeth and say nothing as I had intended to do. I believe it is better not to seem afraid, and to talk to them, if one has anything to say; they are coming, (looking around) that black-browed captain will never give up."

"Aren't you afraid?" asked Margaret.

"It is all the same if I am or not; we are like soldiers now, our lives are in our hands and God's—Poor Archie, may he be spared." Her voice choked as they went along the sunny road, with perils all about them.

## CHAPTER XIII.

"Thou, oh, my country, hast thy foolish ways,  
Too apt to purr at every stranger's praise—  
But if the stranger touch thy modes or laws,  
Off goes the velvet, and out come the claws."

—O. W. Holmes.

At the gate, the young lieutenant hurried forward to assist Margaret, but Faith got nimbly down and threw her reins to Monk, who took them slowly and awkwardly. As he busied himself with the horses, he heard the "black captain" say to the lieutenant, "I took the tall one to be the hardest lot at first, but the red-headed one is a regular 'bee-in-the-bonnet' kind." Turning to Monk, "What kind of people are these, boy?"

"Best I know zur," replied Monk stupidly. (The dialect of the fields coming to him on a sudden inspiration.)

"Look here! you answer my question, do you hear?"

"Yezzur!" with about as much expression as one would see on a ball of black wool.

"What's their politics?" sharply.

"What's dat?" drawled Monk.

"Politics? Great Scott! Isn't it sinful to think of the ignorance to which they condemn these poor

slaves?" Turning to Monk again, "Who are those ladies?"

"Miss Faith an' anuther gal."

"What's her name?"

"Dunno, b'lieve dey call her Willis, er sumpin."

"There's nothing to be gained from this stupid fool," said the captain.

Monk's face was a study as he walked up to the porch behind the captain, where the MacGregor seemed to fill the door-way. "We want dinner for forty men," the captain demanded bluntly.

"It is not such a small matter to get dinner for forty men, sir!"

"Is that all the excuse? I presume it would be easier to feed five or six rebels for a month," the captain retorted with a sneer. The MacGregor looked down on him calmly, and the captain continued, "Who are those girls?"

"My daughters, sir." Monk joined them suddenly, and the captain said, "This boy said one was a visitor."

"I have two daughters," answered the MacGregor, "I supposed you alluded to them."

"Can't they cook?" Monk covered the MacGregor's contemptuous silence by putting a question to the captain, with staring eyes, "Duz yo young ladies up Nauf do de cookin'?"

The captain's eyebrows were raised with the effect of one big wrinkle that filled the space to his low-

growing, thick hair; Monk felt as if he was tackling a bull-dog, but he held on manfully, and said to the MacGregor with a sharp look, "It's Miss Willis, marster, who was with Miss Faith!"

"Oh!" said the MacGregor, naturally, "I did not see them."

Monk telegraphed his approval without winking out-and-out.

"Have you ordered that dinner?" from the captain again.

"Haven't you time to reach Springfield for dinner?"

"We intend to eat it here," insolently.

The MacGregor's powerful form went swinging out of the room in a way that made the soldiers watch him intently. He took his time in hunting Dilse and the cook; Faith had hurried through the hall and asked him to detain them a little while, if they were going to search the house. She sent Helen down stairs to see to things and darted into Archie's room, standing in dismay at sight of his new gray clothes, cap, pistols, etc. She drew the pants on (thankful for the full skirts of the time) and went down to Aunt Dilse's cabin, telling her trouble as she got out of the pants, breathing hard with excitement and haste.

"That's right, little one, give 'em to me and run for the others!"

Faith found Margaret up stairs disturbed, but helpful.

"Oh, Margaret, where is the coat?"

"I put it where you put the pants," she said laughing.

"Oh you dear," cried Faith, "here, put the pistols in the pockets, walk as best you can to Aunt Dilse's cabin, give them to her, and if you are interrupted, say I sent you for the cook; keep cool, your hoops hide the bumps, and you are so tall. Where can Archie be? I am nearly wild with fears for his safety, but I must keep my head. And there are the letters from camp," cramming them in her bosom as she found them.

When the MacGregor left the indefatigable captain, he began to question Monk again. "Where are his sons?"

"Whose zur?" with a drawl.

"The old man's of course," with a tone full of menace.

"Well," slowly, "one of 'em is a travelin' an' tother's at school."

"If I catch you lying to me, I'll shoot you," very sharply.

Monk's face was calmly idiotic as he looked round at the soldiers and distended his lips with the smile that always brought down the house. They broke into hearty laughter, all but the captain, who began again savagely. "Now look here, boy, we are looking for a tall man who has been out here, and you tell me everything you know about him without any more fooling."

"Nozzur, don know nuthin' to tell."

"What is the young lady's name who is visiting here, did you say?"

"Willis," said Monk, in quicker tone. Helen watching behind the blinds, feared they might corner him yet; she stepped out on the porch saying "This boy is needed in the kitchen, if you please."

The soldiers took off their caps and stood facing each other on the wide porch, and seemed interested in the sunlight that played on her shining hair, as she leaned against a porch-column, "Go and help Dilse," she motioned to Monk. The captain watched her cool eyes as he called a sergeant, "Send men to feed the horses, and save a dozen to search the house."

Helen flicked a little dust from her sleeve as she asked "By whose authority?"

"Mine is sufficient, ma'am," he replied, curtly.

Helen looked him over, his coarse clothes, rough boots, let her dark, mocking eyes rest an instant on his dirty nails, looked slowly from one to another of the dozen soldiers standing with the stillness of death and asked in a general way, if they had no officers. The MacGregor hurried out, not thinking it wisest to leave them longer in her hands. It seemed first one then another had the solicitude of the manager who goes often to the side door, in keen interest over the tragedy going on in front.

Monk had just passed him with a few hurried

words: "Do please sir, remember that Miss King's name is Willis," and he sped up the stairs to tell Faith, "they are going to search the house, but don't you be upset, Archie is not in it." To Miss King, "they are looking for your father; as Miss Willis you know nothing, of course. Here they come!" And Monk was off to post Aunt Dilse and the cook. He went to the MacGregor while the officer was upstairs. "It won't do for that captain to see old Harrison. Can't you think of something to keep him away at dinner?"

"Yes, you go to the field, take Harrison a lunch, and tell him to take Prince over to Longs and leave him; tell him we have heard of soldiers around after horses. Tell Tom to bring the hands in at two for dinner and they can rest through the heat." Monk darted through the thick shrubbery through which he had shown Archie awhile before, the road to a cave, which no man could find, he said, "unless I please." But Monk found to his consternation that he had to do as they pleased.

They went on with their search and the captain found some tracks in the dust that gave him a direction; in the line of it a brush pile was lying on the bank of a branch below the orchard. The captain passed it without notice, then seeing nothing beyond, gave orders to have it over-turned. A low door was revealed where a small cave had been blocked up neatly, inside there were two chairs, a table and Monk's violin; and back in the farthest corner, they found

Archie; he was less surprised than they, and bowed to the officer, his blue eyes raised bravely to the lowering gaze of the other.

"Even the blasted caves of the earth do their bidding," the captain exclaimed, angrily, "the women and children keep us busy!"

Archie's fair face flamed at this, "I can tell you, sir, of a place where you would be kept busier."

The captain turned on him with such a look, the lieutenant stepped quickly between. "Shall we go to dinner, captain? You have found more than you expected, if not what you wanted."

Archie walked up to the house between them. The captain looked at the MacGregor and laid his hand on Archie's shoulder; it was flung off like, as he said, the claws of a tiger had touched him, and Aunt Dilse faced him in a fury. Then she looked in the astonished faces around her and said quickly, "I beg your pa'don, sir, but he is wounded in the shoulder you made so free with."

Monk had returned, nearly breathless from haste and stood silently watching. Archie smiled at thought of the seething motion behind the black mask the strangers could not penetrate. They brought out Dandy, Archie's beautiful horse, and another, good enough to confiscate. Dandy was restless with their handling, and Monk adjusted the saddle, whispering to Archie, "Don't you fret, I'll come after you and that soon."



Archie was cool and made the best of it, but a shadow fell over the loving eyes that watched him from the gate, a shadow that brought with it a stinging sense of loss and despair, as his slender youthful figure and dancing bay seemed over-topped or born down some-how by the broad frame and the heavy gray that moved solidly beside them.

With Archie's goodbye to his father, he said, "I am afraid, sir, that you have found your Marlborough on the wrong side." And the captain's goodbye was full of meaning. "There is a setesh who dogs our lines and reports our plans, he has been seen coming out this way, I shall make it my special business to find where!"

\* \* \* \* \*

There was a demoralized household and aching hearts essaying to keep from breaking down. Aunt Dilse took the lead, and with great show of strength counted the loss to the larder with many groans. "Dat whole mutton gone, dess killed Sat'dy, two whole fine ole hams, all de bread cle'r gone, 'sides dem nice biskit Miss Margaret made, (an' I wuz bleegeed fer yo' kind assistance,) sech a time as I had! The cook mad, and Tilde daft wid decitement, goin' round with her hands tanglin'," she groaned over the recollection.

Faith said reproachfully, "Now, Aunt Dilse, I helped till the Black Captain swore at me, and why haven't you taught me to make nice biscuits like Margaret's?"

Aunt Dilse reassured her, "Laws honey, hits time enough to learn how to wo'k, when you hab it to do. I think gyurls ought to have a good time while they can." And Faith said Aunt Dilse was like a spider that disappeared while a scientist was looking at it, when he found that it was spinning around in its own web.

The MacGregor said to Monk, "I shall remember your faithful work to-day, Monk, it was just as bravely done as if you had saved my boy; it is worth your freedom, though that is not much to give now."

"I won't have my freedom, sir!" The boy replied hastily.

"Then what else can I do for you?"

Monk looked down solemnly, keenly enjoying the dramatic moment, feeling in his soul that life had reached a climax. Then he looked up timidly, "I want sometime, to go somewhere—off on a trip, may be as far as St. Louis." Looking around with evident distress at the enormity of the boon he craved.

The MacGregor laughed heartily, "All right, Monk, you shall go and stay a month, and have all the money you need."

Monk was jubilant! Life was changed for him! He had something to look forward to now, and Oh! may be he could see a grand theater! He nearly swooned with happiness at the daring thought. It had been the dream of his life to see Macbeth, Fallstaff and Othello. He had been to a play in Springfield once or twice, but called them small affairs, not

so good as to hear the MacGregor read them; he wanted to see the brilliant scenes of a first-class stage, with the flare of the footlights, and a splendid, full house.

Monk shared the world's opinion that "accessories affect the main issue," as Carlyle said once of a ride through wet fields, where "two drunken block-heads staggered into a cross-road to get out of the way of his carriage, and were seen kissing each other when they passed," and he adds, "just Heaven, what a kiss, with the gaping, full ditches and the drowned bog on each hand."

\* \* \* \* \*

At the same time the captain was saying as they rode along, "I don't believe that boy was possuming all that awful stupidity, but I'll get even with 'em yet."

"There must be some good in a master to whom a slave is that loyal," observed the lieutenant. "I won't fool with niggers anyway. When they make slavery the issue of this bloody business, I am off."

"Well," from the captain, "I am in for what I can make, though we didn't get much to-day." (It is supposed that he meant money, as "spoons" were not yet a war staple.)

## CHAPTER XIV.

"For Courage Mounteth with Occasion."

—*Shakespeare.*

A few days afterward, Monk approached the MacGregor with a hesitating, stammering tongue so unusual with him, the MacGregor said rather sharply, "What is it, Monk, are you ready for your trip?"

"No sir, but I wanted to—speak of that, you promised me, you know—and—I would like to back down, you know."

"But you see, I cannot, if you are so modest as to your deserts. A MacGregor never breaks his word." He was making it hard for Monk.

"Yes sir, but I want you to do something else for me, and it is a secret that I can't tell to anybody." Letting his eyes fall before the master's steady gaze. "I want you to let me have Prince for a few days, I will take good care of him sir." For the first time during the strife the MacGregor suspected him, and for an instant suspected that it would be the last he would see of Monk or horse. Then he asked, "Why do you want Prince?"

"Because sir," picking at his cap and eyeing it critically, "he and Dandy ride to—or—alike."

The MacGregor saw and repented of his doubt; he looked at the boy in a grave pity for the frame that

held the great heart in it. He only said briefly, "You can have him, Monk, I trust you entirely."

Monk said not a word to any one else. He went with the horse to the gate, on which the MacGregor leaned on his crossed arms, watching him silently. Monk led the horse up to him and took some bills that were handed him.

"It may be that I will never see you any more." He extended his hand timidly, "Goodbye, Marster!"

"Goodbye, Monk!" There was a sound of tears in his voice that upset Monk completely and Prince felt an unintentional spur that sent him off like the wind.

The black captain placed Archie in the safest and filthiest cell he could find in the prison. The days were dreary and the nights worse with his aching shoulder on the hard boards. The young lieutenant set to work to interest Major B——, an officer respected by all, and a gentleman who was just, as well as brave. He managed to get Archie removed to more comfortable quarters in a room above, where he had the advantage of a window. He could see the soldiers drilling in the distance and watch the tramp, tramp of the guard on his beat, or any idlers passing. He had listened to horrible tales of life in the prisons from a fellow-prisoner, who had been recaptured, till it seemed useless and deadly to try to escape. Thinking of these things one day while watching a group of negroes collected near the jail, he noticed

that they were all in blue uniform, and saw one black fellow, standing stiffly, his arms folded, with stupid eyes half closed. Archie started, rubbed his eyes and looked again, and saw the narrow line of white teeth that revealed Monk's unmistakable smile. Archie never doubted him a moment and the sight of him stirred him with wild dreams of freedom, only to fall away despairing, as he turned to look over the dingy walls of his cell. When the keeper brought the bread for his supper, a colored soldier was going the rounds with him carrying water. Archie was still looking gloomily from the window, thinking to keep his disgusted eyes from the tray. He nearly screamed when he turned and looked into Monk's impassive face; Monk had a finger to his lip, and Archie turned the exclamation into a coughing fit. As they went back, Monk managed to slip in on him and whispered, "Rest easy, see you to-morrow, I'm at work here."

They found him so handy and willing, that he soon had charge of a number of cells, Archie's among them. In a few days he had his plans completed, he smuggled an old blue coat to Archie, he would leave the door unfastened after supper and hurry to have the horses ready; he told Archie where to find Prince ready saddled with an old negro woman "that he had conjured" he said with a grin. "The last sentinel will be the worst, if you can't slip by him in the dark, make a run for it. Then I will slip Dandy out, and if I hear

any shooting, will tell the guard I am sent after a runaway.'

"What if they get you, Monk?"

"They musn't get me and nobody would know me except the Black Captain."

"Of course he will go after you."

"Then I must be somewhere else," said Monk, doggedly, "but this is your only chance. Do not worry about me. I'm in no danger."

\* \* \* \* \*

The very boldness of the scheme proved auspicious, and Archie's delight equalled his surprise when he found himself on Prince. He did not halt at the sentinel's call, a shot rang out, another and another, and the volatile Prince fairly spurned the ground in the mad race for life. When he was stopped, spent and foaming, Archie heard other flying hoofs, and Monk was by him in a flash. "There'll be fleet steeds that follow," he said, his wild enjoyment apparent through all his anxiety. "We can't breathe 'em yet though," and the run was on again.

At Branksome they concealed the horses and went in to see what the MacGregor advised. The reunion, at once happy and full of fear, was short and Monk was elated on hearing the MacGregor call him a hero.

"Of course you will go right on, the Black Captain will shoot you both on sight. Ride the horses southward, but go slow to-night. A note was put under

the door yesterday from Frank, here it is with directions to reach his mother in Christian County. If there are no troops, let Monk stay there till the coast is clear, or the Black Captain gone."

"Or tell him," Monk replied, "I took one of your best horses and run away and the next you heard of me I was in Springfield with a blue uniform."

"And of course, I will know nothing further," the MacGregor added, looking at him steadily, "And Monk, among the daring exploits of the war, I have heard nothing as truly ~~as~~ brave as this escape you have planned and carried out so heroically to-night. God bless you!"

\* \* \* \* \*

They kept the lonely mountain paths and rode on briskly through the wild Ozark hills, dodging from the sight of man, when possible and reached Mrs. Truman's the next evening. Archie found her sweet-faced and bright, with cherry, brave eyes like Frank's.

"I am just delighted," she said warmly, "Frank talked of you so much. You must rest to-night, and we will get Monk to stand guard. The soldiers have been here looking for Price's Scout they said; my hope is that they will run across Joe Shelby; they say he is over in Arkansas, they wouldn't want to see any more Scouts during the war."

Archie's face clouded. "I can not run you into danger, Mrs. Truman. I came by Frank's directions and depended on him entirely."

The mother smiled proudly. "Everybody depends



on Frank, he will not fail you." She made him comfortable on the couch before the fire-place. "Frank thinks this is a jolly resting place, once when he was only twelve years old," she went on talking of Frank as she sat down, "I was teaching and a sudden storm raised the creek, Frank waded into it, had to swim a little, waved his arms to me from the other bank and sped away to get horses. I wasn't a bit doubtful, just waited till he came."

"Such a brave little mother as it was," cried Frank's voice, as he came slipping in and he held her in his arms as he said to Archie, "And it was always so, it inspires confidence in one's self and gives courage to face the world, to have such a mother as mine." Almost with the greeting he asked his mother solemnly, "What have you got for supper?"

"Guess?"

"Fried chicken as I live, your look inspires me. I can trust you."

"Well you may, in as small a matter as that. I would trust you in any way and to anything except—a woman, any other woman."

"How?" cried Frank, with wide eyes.

"A woman," she went on serenely, pretending to frown. "I could not bear for any women to come between my boy and his mother; ten to one she'd be light-headed or treacherous or sulky or something."

"Oh, come now, mother, suppose you think all 'females' as Goethe would have it, are treacherous;"

he turned to Archie, "Mother has spent too much time in teaching girls at the very meanest age, she has no faith in rosebuds. But we will not worry, little mother, there may not be any future for us. We see nothing ahead of us now but 'forward, charge,' and roll of drum. And here is the grave Cornelia with a roll of her eyes that means supper." As they went to the dining room, "but mother, if you could see the stuff we have to eat, you would never condemn anyman to eat his own cooking. How is the Sage of the Ozarks? I am afraid we can't get to see him this time, Archie, the exigencies of the times impose short calls."

He rattled on gaily with questions and comments through supper, eating with such enjoyment that old Cornie revolved in her mind, (if one might call its slow pace a revolution), what she would have for breakfast.

After supper, Frank allowed his mother to see that she had struck hard on the woman question. "In case we survive the war, that's what the boys are beginning to say now, but you know I am naturally hopeful,"

"Very." His mother interrupted with a nod, seeing through him at once. "What would you have me do? there are no prospects for young men, even if the independence of the south is secured, we cannot see through the mad rush that is carrying us on. There are no wonderful things to befall people any more.

I cannot toil up the mountain 'bearing a banner,' and would not win a single rhyme if I did."

"Must you always crave something wonderful, my son? we have been happy in our own little world and the home we have battled for. 'The great world's stairs' are blackened with perils and the chill of the disappointed falls heavily from one rung to another."

"I have no fear, mother, but as Aunt Dilse would say, 'this is only a succumstance' now, and we must discuss ways and means; we can't sleep here," with a wistful look at his bed room door, and Archie answered with a sigh. "We will go to our cave and hope to breakfast with you in the morning."

"It is dreadful," his mother said with fierce feeling, "that you should have to sleep in a cave and be hunted from home like a wild beast. The Land of Liberty indeed! Justice is crushed before fanaticism and money."

"You are right, mother, we could snap our fingers at their fanaticism, we could give them the niggers and turn 'em loose like the Kilkenny cats, but if we are conquered it will be money that does it. Come Archie my boy, I wish for your sake we could stay."

Mrs. Truman sent them out cheerfully, gave a kiss to each, and Monk followed them with comforters for the cave. She had not told Frank that the Feds threatened to burn her house because he was in the southern army and said little of the dangerous life; she watched him go out in the black night that might be full of lurking foes. And before her rose a vivid

picture of Lantenac, an outlawed Frenchman, who had returned home and was reading a placard that told of the price set on his own head. She remembered his stern figure against the blue sky and the waves tossing wildly. Then she went to Frank's bed room, she threw herself down on her knees and stifled her sobs with the bed-clothes she had tucked so often around his curly head, while she prayed for his safety.

The faithful Cornie went in heavily. "Won't you please, Miss Frances, come wid me to fasten up Jock an' the chickens? We want dem fur breakfast!"

Mrs. Truman knew that Cornie had fastened those chickens every night alone, and tied the barn-door with a string that anybody could break, but she thanked the kind heart that sought to bring her forgetfulness.

Mother and son met brightly next morning, and parted with hopeful words; the boys started southwest, with nothing to favor them except the daring of youth. Monk went with them over the best of the road, and Frank decided on a safe retreat for him. "You must go to the Sage, tell him I sent you with two fine horses I want him to keep; if he has no feed"—(Monk took out his money with a flourish, dismissing that consideration with a wave of his hand). "If the Feds should come, you must hide."

"I will never hide from men," Monk said stoutly, "but if the devil or the Black Captain climbs that hill, I will seek a cave in the valley!"

## CHAPTER XV.

"Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,  
Of charging steeds, careering fast  
Along Benharow's shingly side,  
Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride."

—*Scott.*

Frank and Archie climbed slowly up a mountain-side at noon to rest and lunch; from their high perch they looked over rugged hills to the right and out on a valley farm to the left, the dusty road creeping around it, narrowing in the distance.

"Do you see the long string of rail-fence running south, Frank? It looks like a monster, spotted serpent, lying idly in the sun; its dark, upper rails shining like streaks through borders of yellow flowers. The poor, old house is probably the home of some good woman, the men gone to the war. It is beautiful, though, in the gorgeous tints of autumn. I believe Bruce is right about the beauty and safety of the woods. But, then, Bruce is always right." His voice dropping wistfully, his gaze far away.

Frank caught him suddenly by the arm and pulled him behind the thicker screen of brush, as he pointed to the road they had just left that ran around the base of the hill. A company of bluecoats were galloping along, their bright arms glancing against the noon-day sun. Archie found his glass, and his cheeks

flushed angrily. "It's the Black Captain on his splendid gray. Who could have reported our start so soon? I would trust Monk with my life. We have told him, though, to watch that Stringfellow; if Monk finds him reporting me, he's in a sorry box if Monk gets a crack at him when he is out hunting."

"Well," Frank replied after a little, "you will have to trust me with your life today, and we can't fight with two to forty." His mind recurred to another day when beautiful, blue eyes looked trustingly into his own. "You are so good, I know you will find a way." "Good!" Frank smiled at the way she had said it; and here he was, among the wild hills of White river, hunted by the worst savage in Springfield, without arms, and Archie, with eyes so like hers, looking into his and saying, "Yes, I know you will find a way; if they should see us, and climb the hill this minute you would spread yourself like Roderick Dhu, as if your warriors would start from every bush!"

"Indeed I would not," Frank said with a laugh, "I would take to my heels where they could not follow!"

"Look at that ruffian through the glass; my father's life is in danger, with such a man hunting him down."

"You must be quiet, Archie; we may be within sound of a scout, this minute; we will go round the hill presently, and down on the other side to thicker woods. They climbed down, and circled another, and so, on and on, for many tedious hours. Later, when

they stopped to rest, Archie said gravely, "Frank, we must get out of these hills before night, of all the wild and eerie places; I never supposed that such precipitous hills and crags filled so much of the earth! You couldn't hire me to stay all night in these solitary passes! Do you want to know why? When old Dilse saw that Black Captain touch my shoulder, she sprang at him with an uncanny cry like I have heard her describe the 'Ban-Shee's' call. It is sent to warn Highlanders of any calamity in store for them. It may be death, or a secret foe, or any grave trouble. Scott says it was common for families to consult an oracle before starting on a raid or into a battle. Of course, the superstition requires it to be something weird and awful! One way was to send a number of men to a wild gorge or some desolate spot, where they wrapped one of the party in a cow's hide, except his head, and left him all night; he was to ask the fateful question, and the spirits who haunt these wild places, would impress the answer on his excited fancy, if they did not find him demented when they went for him at dawn. Nobody but Scott could make such terrible things interesting. If he could see these gray hollows, with two forlorn soldiers among the red hills, he would turn a ditty like this,

'All while he stripped the wild-rose spray,  
His axe and bow beside him lay.'

But honestly, Frank, I saw a hump on the hillside

over yonder, that might look like the wretch wrapped in the cow skin, if it were later."

Frank got up to start. "We will see what it is; we must go on till we find something human, or something to eat."

The hump resolved itself into a boy wrapped up in a piece of gray blanket, evidently too lazy to move in the pleasant autumn day to keep warm. In the distance they saw a cabin in a lonesome valley at the foot of the hills. The boy was mildly surprised when they hailed him with,

"Say, boy, who lives in the house over there?"

"Hineses!" after a long pause.

"What kind of people?" They got a stupid shake of the head in reply.

"Can you show us the way to get there?"

The boy stared from one to the other. His pale eyes were the exact color of great freckles on his round face, completing the resemblance to a turkey egg; he seemed to be turning the problem over somewhere.

Frank offered him a piece of cake left from his lunch, and Archie held out a piece of silver; he clutched at both, turned promptly, and they followed with a willingness that proved disastrous. "Which side are you on, boy?" Frank asked as they walked along. The guide looked at him with cunning eyes. "Tell me what you is first."

They went down by the back of the cabin, walking



slowly as a strong, full woman's voice stirred the dense stillness of the hills.

"And yit with him who counts the sands,  
And holds the w-a-t-e-r-s in his hands,  
I know—a lasting rec-ord stands  
Ins-c-r-i-b-ed against my name!"

It floated out clear and shrill in the chorus,

"Oh! hender me not, for I will serve the Lor-d,  
An' I'll p-r-a-i-s-e him till I die!"

The rolling whir of the spinning wheel went up and down with the voice. Through the door they could see a young woman in plaid home-spun, walking back and forth, her right arm turning the wheel swiftly, her left thrown out in a long, vigorous motion that changed the dangling roll to solid yarn.

Archie was so interested he forgot to stop the yell the boy was raising for "Miss Hines!" A very large woman stepped to the door, which she filled completely, and looked them over calmly.

"Five foot ten in her stockings," Archie whispered to Frank, as she felt for a firm footing for the capacious, blue yarn stockings that planted themselves boldly beneath the bright red and blue cotton dress that floated freely from the shoulders, in scorn of stay or belt. Her dark, soft eyes answered their request for supper before the kind voice drawled, "To be sho; step right in." She ushered them into a large

room with brown-raftered ceiling, clean floor and cheerful fire; but the spinning wheel had vanished, and left no sign.

"Take cheers to the fire; it's gittin' cool-like," and the hostess disappeared through a door beside the huge chimney, its opening followed by a hasty scuttling on the other side.

Archie and Frank were left to their interest in another occupant of the brown room. A little, old woman, wrinkled and yellow, was down on her knees in the corner of the hearth, scratching diligently. She brought "Betsy Snap" to Archie so vividly, he caught himself peering around to see if she was rubbing "Uncle Chill's" invisible legs. She stopped her clawing, raised her head suddenly and gave a shrill screech, which her placid daughter-in-law met in the doorway, and she called out, "Susan Ann Cyarline?" Then, as if deciding suddenly on the fourth, she raised her voice, "Sa-Jane?" The door opened slowly, and Sa-Jane, with a single step was in the room. At a guess, she was fifteen; of a certainty, she was imposed on by the whole family; she halted suddenly in the cruel light of the fire, her long legs tangling. The mother, totally unconscious of the moral ruin she was causing, was walking around the table (which she had lifted bodily from a corner) in a ponderous way, her shoeless feet and heavy weight producing the effect of a dog trotting over a bridge.

"Sa-Jane, can't ye see what ails Granny?"

Sa-Jane darted at a small parcel which she picked up, but she allowed her eyes to wander unwisely across the fireplace; she met two pairs of bright, amused eyes, dropped the parcel, and sped through the door, which opened mysteriously to receive her. Granny screamed out in Choctaw, as Archie thought, but Frank interpreted the words as a wail for her "bitter-sweet yerbs."

"Sa-Jane!" called the mother in despairing tones, "can't ye see to Granny?"

Sa-Jane appeared again, and her last state was worse than the first. The mother stopped, surprised, and the house stood still. Then she seemed to think of the supper, and called again, "Susan Ann Cyarline?" The rising inflection on Cyarline brought the capable performer on the spinning wheel, who had been cooking supper in the shed; a dark strong young woman, "with no nonsense about her," who set to work to straighten things out. Granny was set in her chair, where she stayed rigidly, looking like a mummy. Sa-Jane was sent to the kitchen, and supper announced. The young men were so hungry they were quite merry over well-cooked ham and corn-bread.

Mrs. Hines looked solemnly over her glasses at Archie. "Mister, will you have cream in your coffee?" Then added plaintively, in answer to his bland affirmative, "Well, Mister, we hain't it!" Still

solicitous to please, she asked if he would have "long or short sweetenin'."

Archie, liking his coffee sweet, said at a hazard, "long sweetening, if you please," and had the pleasure of seeing her pour sorghum molasses in his cup. He was nearly choking with laughter, but Cyarline's serious face awed him to a respectful manner.

Before they finished supper, Mrs. Hines' curiosity urged her to ask, "Mister, do youins belong to old Mr. Price's company?"

Archie looked at Frank, who answered quickly, "Oh, no! Madam; we are strong lovers of the Union; I am a recruiting officer, and we are making a run for the army; strangely enough, we do not find any men at home," with a casual glance at the pegs on the wall where guns had rested.

The staid Cyarline nearly dropped a plate of hot cakes, Sa-Jane scampered excitedly to the kitchen, and the mother, astonished, probably, for the first time in her life, exclaimed, "Well! I'll be dad-blamed!"

The quick tramp of horses' feet broke the moment's stillness, followed by the order, "Halt!"

Archie cried, "Excuse us, that might be Mr. Price's company. Good-bye! And we thank you, Madam."

They sprang through the kitchen door. There was a sound like the rising of quails, but nobody was in sight; they went speeding through the darkness and up the hill behind the hospitable house of the

"Hineses." They stopped to rest in a place inaccessible to horsemen, and Archie said between his panting breaths, "Wouldn't you like to see Sa-Jane when those yankees go in and ask for the rebels they were feeding? Then with a sigh, "I may live to be an old man without finding out what 'short sweetening' is."

"They are after us, Archie, and on a warm trail; but I have promised to take you safely to the army. What shall we do now?"

"Oh! let us go back! I do so want to see Ann and Susan!"

"No," very firmly, "we can't go into a trap without guns; we will find some place to sleep in the fastness of these Bear Creek hills."

As they trudged along, when out of danger, Archie sang to keep awake,

"She went down the new-cut road,  
And I went down the lane,—  
I'll meet you in the mornin',  
An' a g-o-o-d-bye—Sara-Jane!"

\* \* \* \* \*

Monk made a run of it as he went back, he climbed the hill on which the Sage lived with hopes that were crushed when he viewed the poor little place, and settled into a rage when he went inside. Monk had truly expected to see a Sage,—had some kind of an old Roman in his mind—not the poor, flabby thing before him, flabby in face, clothes and character. But the Sage promised to be interesting. They sat

and eyed each other solemnly. The Sage was dressed in brown jeans, faded to yellow, made half-an-half between the Colonial and the present wars, with brass buttons belonging to the former. Monk watched his bald head in distress, and decided that if the Sage died when he was in reach of him, he would buy him a wig to be buried in; as the Sage's right eye-brow was highest, on account of squinting the other eye to thread his needle, he decided that he would set the wig higher on that side to keep in line with the straggling brows. Having settled this point to his satisfaction, he told the Sage, with serious forebodings, about the horses Frank had sent.

"Hosses ain't nothin' to keer fer," the Sage replied, still eyeing Monk hopelessly. "I've keered fur hosses befo', hundreds of 'em at a time, when wars wuz all around, too, and—Injuns!"

Monk was busy trying to date the Indian wars that "Daddy Kerens" could have been engaged in, when he saw that he was warming to reminiscences, and Monk heard all about his wife—the wonderful Nancy Ann—and the twenty cuts a day had grown to thirty-one) and of the remarkable generals and colonels he had lived with as overseer; and of how he had traveled all over the "New-nited states" in his "prosperous days, an' fit duels, and rode race-hosses in Kentucky."

Monk concluded that he might be able to stand life up there during this flow. By the time it ebbed, the Federals were evacuating Springfield.

## CHAPTER XVI.

"But he who stems a stream with sand  
And fetters flame with waxen band,  
Has yet a harder task to prove—  
By firm resolve to conquer love."

—*Scott.*

General Fremont was called away from command in Missouri, and General Price returned to Springfield in December; a move that brought quiet for a time, and brought our young soldier friends to the winter joys of Branksome.

Archie's gay laugh rang through the house, before the others reached the door. "Dear old house," he exclaimed, "I am glad to see it right side up; and the Black Captain did not carry off my peerless sister! I feared an elopement in this proud family!" kissing Faith, and laughing to hide tears of joy. "And here is Monk! as large as life and true as steel." Shaking Monk's hand cordially, "When this war is over, Monk, we'll have a big time in remembrance of the life I owe you. And now comes Aunt Dilse! A grand dame and an elf in one! There is none like her! None!"

Bruce and Frank came in, and when the evening had brought Colonel Winstead and St. John, Archie inquired for Miss King. "Where is the tall, pale Margaret?"

"She wouldn't stay, because she felt that she increased our danger, as the soldiers hunted her father so relentlessly; Mrs. Turner, who has been a stanch friend to us, carried her to Mr. Beale's, an out-of-the-way place, and they pretend to be Union people."

"They are Union people, to save their property," said the MacGregor, "there is no harm in that, if we can use them."

Archie whispered to Bruce, "He could always use people, in that large way of his, as if it was an honor to the people;" then aloud, "We will go after them, at once, Mrs. Turner and this Margaret, with the eyes of an eagle, and the heart of a dove, as far as I know." His mirthful eyes did not seem to rest longer on his brother's calm face than on the others, yet Bruce hastened to reply, "We will trust you to go, Archie; take Monk, and be off."

"Where is Dandy, Monk?" ignorant of the secret they had kept from him.

"Dandy—is gone, sir," Monk said, after a pause.

"Gone where?" Red spots in his cheeks as he looked from one to the other.

"Blackie took him that last time, sir!"

Archie glared at him as if he held him responsible. Monk answered the look. "If you had heard the way he talked to your father, and your sister, and to me (drawing himself up with dignity), when he came back after you, you wouldn't be worrying over any horse. We thought, once, the end of all things had come."



"Bravo!" cried the MacGregor, "you push Monk to the wall, and he will say something."

Archie was counting, "we are four Rebs, with the MacGregor worth the four; there may be a few straggling Feds as far down as Beales—if Jeff Thompson's proclamations have not found them—Miss Margaret is there, and wanted here!" Then turning to Colonel Winstead, "I shall bring Mrs. Turner, too. Now, Monk, buckle these pistols around you, and when I shoot, you do likewise."

Monk went off, as proud as a page to a plumed Saladin, with the Crusaders ahead. They brought the ladies safely; though once on the road Monk, who was riding in advance, threw up his hand, palm outward, a tragic sign to the others; before Archie had stopped talking, Mrs. Turner's sorrel sped by them at such an astonishing gait they had trouble to follow, as she cried, "Come on, you all! I know another ford, an' Cricket knows what she's about; she's been chased by bluecoats till she knows 'em by the very smell!"

Faith spoke that night of the sense of security Price had brought, her happy eyes on her own especial soldiers.

"I dunno," Mrs. Turner answered her, "we lived in a reign of fire and sword so long, with the Feds 'a-chargin' around, that you all don't seem vigilant enough to amuse the people. They have actually settled down to meat agin; an' Charity Beale went

summers and dug up a ole rooster who'd been afraid to crow for six weeks, an' cooked him with dumplin's, as high as flour is." While they indulged in speculations on this side issue, she went on, "Wonder what some folks will do now, who've set on the fence a-wobblin', an' called themselves Union men! That's John Beale, an' his boys are making money hand over fist; raised fifteen hundred pounds of tobacco this summer."

"But they harmed no one," Margaret said softly; "he is kind to all his neighbors, and sheltered the friendless Miss Willis with genuine hospitality."

"That's nothing," said Mrs. Turner, "anybody would do that; but I like to see a man have opinions; now that Black Captain come down here to steal, and kill and whup us back into the Union, and nothin' stops him; ever body hates him, but they fear him as well; I admire his pluck, an' I'm shore I hate him like pizen too; the Southern boys are too easy, an' thes no tellin' what Stringfellow and his kind are hatching this minute to report on you all. I'd settle him!"

"Hurrah for Mrs. Turner!" exclaimed the MacGregor, "I have found an advocate for pushing the war on my plan."

"Oh, father, we are so sick of fighting, and extreme measures. Let us throw it from us! It may be the last New Years we may all spend together! Let us have a big time at home, a dance or something jolly!"

"All right, my boy! I'll help you out, whatever you

decide on." The MacGregor looked wistfully at Archie's bright face.

\* \* \* \* \*

The dance was decided on for New Years. Frank and Archie brought some friends out from Springfield, some in rough soldier's garb, two or three resplendent in new uniforms—St. John among them—and one poor little comrade, wild for some fun, looked down sadly at his toes. Archie promised him a pair of pumps, and for one night he forgot his longing for the mother and sister north of the river who had no heart for Christmas gaities, while he was exposed to the chances of war.

Three or four neighbor girls were invited, and all came in dark dresses, in deference to the soldier's clothes; all but Mrs. Gray; she was dressed in cream cashmere, with immense hoops; the neck half-high, a common fashion of the time. The young ladies encircled her in protest, but Mr. Gray was ever ready to take his wife through gallantly. "You girls go hunt partners among this motley crew, if you would show your disdain for dress; Mrs. Gray never does: I am here to testify that I have never seen her at the breakfast table when she was not well-dressed and handsome." Holding his arm to his wife for the "first set."

A little Gypsy neighbor who had compromised on red ribbons, said to him as they rose, "You always were the darlinest husband I ever knew; I don't be-

lieve Helen Gray half appreciates you; why, I would lay down my life for such devotion."

A quiet looking girl surprised the others by adding, "She would just be the sweet little dunce to do that very thing; the woman who lives long and looks handsome finds the soft snap every time, while the good woman, who makes a sacrifice of youthful charms, works herself to death in order to give her children a blooming young stepmother."

Still looking after Mr. Gray, Gypsy continued, "Dancing with his wife, too, like a countryman; that reminds me of a dining I attended on Finley Creek, away down at Uncle John's; every solitary man marched stiffly into dinner with his own wife and sat down solemnly to the meal in a silence that was funereal. Every wife was dressed in black, and I wish you could have seen them. I found one lone young man—I never fail in that you know—and chatted to him gaily, to break the spell that was settling over that doomed table. It was no use; I tried to engage one big farmer in conversation and his wife glared at me over her glasses. I heard afterwards they pronounced me fast, and the big man's wife called me a Yankee fer tryin' to interduce new ways among a religious people. Think of it!"

Faith said to the girls, "You must make these soldier boys happy for one night; I wonder where Archie is?"

"Looking for Mrs. Turner," said that youth, blush-

ing a little as he met the Gypsy's black eyes, carrying her off to dance, her bright cheeks redder than ever.

Mrs. Turner's mistakes, her quaint remarks and keen enjoyment, furnished amusement for all. Colonel Winstead was a dancer of the old school; his surprising agility and the wild vigor of his double-shuffle divided the honors of the evening with the MacGregor, whose joints were as much too stiff as the Colonel's were too limber; his stately steps were appropriated as a joke in the general hilarity Monk's fiddle roused.

Monk had composed a march in the summer; he carried Archie to the cave to listen to it. It began with the notes of birds, the coo of the dove, the chirping of the wren, the breezy airs of the bobolink, and the soaring song of the lark; these died away, and then rose the call to arms, the fierce din of battle, the wails of the dying, closing with the triumph of bugle calls. Monk began it that night with an air of victory, but Archie stopped him. "No, not this last night, Monk, give us something lively."

Monk rattled off, "Pretty Bettie Martin, tip-toe fine" and "Zip Coon" and "Brown Jug" till the Gypsy, who had kept time for a while, broke out suddenly in demoralizing peals of laughter, the others joining in her comical merriment.

St. John had just been saying to Faith, "How splendid you are in green, like a peach glowing among its own rich leaves." When the Gypsy stopped

the dance just then, Faith went over to her suddenly, and St. John, finding himself deserted, joined Helen to be amused with her comments of Archie's frolic. Early in the evening when he was talking to Faith, he noticed her eyes wandered over the room, past Margaret, busily engaged with two tall soldiers, Bruce and another in black, whose back was toward Faith. St. John sought to hold her attention with some of his cavalry exploits out west, and stopped in disgust when he saw her eyes open wide at a bow from Frank Truman, the soldier in black. "Yes, he has cast his all on a suit of clothes; he has flirted off in a corner with your philosophical friend, who is an heiress, by the way," and he smiled, "funny, isn't it?"

"What?" rather haughtily.

"About heiresses; as a rule they are anything but serious, because you know, they can afford to be gay; well," and he sang softly,

"Just for a handful of silver he left us,  
Just for a feather to stick in his hat."

his eyes bent on her face quizzically.

"You might reserve your foot-notes till the last; I do not like to be set up in brackets when I am listening."

He laughed. "Were you listening? Then I will never have faith in appearances again."

"Did you ever have faith in any thing? Why were you named St. John, any way?"

"Oh! I was named for Uncle John, and I was so saint-like, they put the saint to mine to distinguish us."

"It was a piece of fine irony on the part of your sponsors," and she saw his peculiar smile beneath his heavy mustache as she went on, "I think your parents, instead of being awed by saintliness, were nerved, through despair, to a hope, as the patriarchs gave their children names that bore a promise of what they wished for them. Yours fastened in desperation, on St. John, when they saw how terrible you were; I know you scratched and smashed things before you learned—to smile."

Through such idle talk he leaned over her chair with an air of devotion that meant much to others looking on, Faith's rising color misleading them also. Mrs. Gray was delighted; Frank, looking on, was reminded of a thrill that shot through his arm once, as he turned to wring the neck of a pet parrot. He was nineteen, his first sweetheart—ten years older—insisted on pouring a languishing love on his ungainly self; she missed a ring once, and accused him of taking it, with pensive hope; he denied it so vehemently that it roused the interest of the parrot, who screamed out, "I saw you! I saw you! I saw you!"

a phrase he had taught the mischievous bird with great labor.

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All the evening he was a gallant cavalier with the stranger guests; he danced with the heiress and with Miss King, who was more charming every time he met her, had lots of fun with the Gipsy and Mrs. Turner, and when St. John, by Mrs. Gray's side, gave them bland good-nights, Frank stood by Faith, and gave them merry ones; as both stood their ground, Bruce and Archie had to see the young ladies home. For all the fun, Frank went to his room, thinking again of Monk's assertion, "Yes, this a dickens of a place to go a-courting, sir!"

St. John sat by his window, and looked out over the cold, moonlighted night. "What is it, I wonder, that holds me here, beside the horrible lonesomeness of Uncle John's bachelor menage?" He thought of other places where he had visited, when plenty of money and handsome regimentals had made it easy for him, where the wines and dinners were excellent, where the soft voices of the fashionable world were very pleasant to a young soldier. It recurred to him now, that there was often a lack of enjoyment or wit, and that the people were drawn together in a kind of social commerce. Sometimes a genial host could draw the souls of men to him,—as the MacGregor could do anywhere—but bright wits had been dulled, too often, in the bumps along the avenues



of trade: Money held them; here it was sympathy, a wholesome sincerity that drew these men and women together, as naturally as water runs down hill. "I wonder," he paused and knocked his cigar slowly on the window-sill—"whenever I joined in a country dance with such a gusto? Actually went down with the foolish glee that ruled the crowd from the MacGregor down to Monk! It is strange" (beating off from the bush all the time). "what form of madness seizeth sometimes? It is a queer world anyway! I know a poor girl who would give a million dollars for Miss MacGregor's face, for the fine eyes, and the dimple, and the peachy cheeks; she is poor, because half her millions can't buy them. Still, even with her muddy skin, and squinting eyes, she could marry—lots of fellows! Heighho! Well, after all, the good things of this world are about equally divided, and,"—his thoughts traveled slower,—"I can't afford to—lose my head. It may be, that we will go soon. Wonder if Truman wants to go? Curious how good-looking that fellow is!" He listened a moment as he closed the window, "I suppose it is that duncie down in the music room!" The Rigaud smile deepened around his mouth, then he got up and went solemnly to bed.

\* \* \* \* \*

When the girls went up to their room Mrs. Gray said to Faith, "I tried to excuse your unaccountable

spirits tonight to St. John, but I did it lamely, and he only smiled."

"And his mustache went up, and his nose came down," Faith quoted.

"I am surprised at you, Faith," her sister said, offended.

"Oh! he is not as bad as Rigaud, his mustache conceals the line that will deepen with years, but the sneering, mocking spirit of Monsieur Rigaud will harden with time and grow on him."

Helen answered with a yawn, "There is nothing so successful in a tiresome life as the mocking sarcasm that you condemn. It will furnish amusement through the long and tedious years—when you have tired of heroics. How I wish you could go somewhere—and I should have taken you somewhere only for this war—and tone down the"—she stopped an instant, then went on, "the nature that holds you. It isn't stylish to be natural any more, only in beauty; it is 'back-woodsy'!"

Faith had no inkling of the nearing time that would demand the "natural girl" and turned away, a little crushed, from the big, black condemning eyes; she went up to her window, which she opened as the soft tones of the piano floated up to her from the stillness below.

"How beautiful!" Helen exclaimed suddenly, "I did not know St. John could sing." And they all lis-

tened to "Florence Vane" with its tender longing for the dead.

"I think it is"—Margaret stopped, and Faith leaned far out of the window to catch the words lowered this time, with a thrill of wonder. The repression of a strong life had fallen away and melted in a storm of passion, that pulsed with the quivering keys to the sweet old song,

"Thee do I love dearly,  
Yes—madly, sincerely,  
But thou hast nearly  
Made hope grow gray.

Hast thou no feeling,  
To see me kneeling,  
My love revealing,  
Day after day?"

Faith caught every word, with one hand clutching her throat, against its wild, new throbbing. Mrs. Gray noticed her tense figure, as she idly combed the braids of bright hair about her shoulders; when Faith seemed to come back into the room, she was saying to Miss King, "It was a change—for a suit of clothes."

The other answered, "But his splendid hair crowned the clothes. What do you think, Faith?"

"Of whom?"

"Frank Truman, of course."

"I think he is just the—same." Her sister did not appear to notice her warm cheeks and starry eyes.

## CHAPTER XVII.

"And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,  
Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,  
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,  
He rose, and sought the moonshine pure."

—*Scott.*

General Price waited in vain for the help he expected; between his desire to hold the state, and unwillingness to expose "his boys" to the heavy odds against them, he waited till the Federals were reported advancing from Rolla and Kansas City. Notice was given and our boys from Branksome found the camp in the bustle of preparation with no time for good-byes.

Frank's quarters were changed, and going in after dark, as he supposed, to a double hut assigned them, he laid down to rest, and to take himself sternly to task because of his regrets over leaving Springfield. He was roused suddenly by the voices of young Winstead and a friend whom he had seen with him since their return to camp.

St. John was saying, "It is the perfect, ripe beauty that artists rave over. I saw her the other night in cream color, her eyes, brown and splendid with red-gold hair, and neck that was perfect in tint and shape; I saw her one day dressed in some green and white stuff, standing in front of a great maple in all

the glory of gold and crimson foliage; the effect was magnificent."

"But she is married?" the other inquired.

"Oh, yes, of course!" in a tone rather undefinable to both listeners.

"Husband in the army?"

Frank imagined St. John's smile as he nodded in reply.

"And Faith, you call the other?" After a pause the answer came slower, and Frank felt his heart bounding as he strained his ears to catch the lowered voice.

"Faith is different; Faith is the bird's song in the morning, the dew-drop at sunrise; but," in answer to an "Oh!" and a significant whistle from his companion,—“the song is not easily arrested, nor the dew-drops brushed lightly away. If you can imagine a perfect creation of nature—Ellen Douglas, with the majesty of the blood of kings, as she rowed on Loch Katrine, and the clear-headed Portia with her happy wit and trust in all that is good, moulded into one, you have what Faith will be, if life is kind to her.”

There was a minute's stillness, then a sudden jump from some high seat to the ground, and the words, "You are hard hit; where can she be seen, and when?" with a pretense of great excitement.

"Any time," St. John replied, "if the Feds do not run us away before we are ready; I will take you out with pleasure."

His friend seemed to remark his confident tone, and

said gaily, "Aha! you propose to make life kind for this bud of promise; if a Yankee bullet should leave the beauty a widow, I wouldn't give much for your efforts in behalf of possibilities! I know you!"

"But the other is a beauty, too, and well worth the winning, I assure you." And St. John laughed softly.

"Any rivals in the way?"

"None worth mentioning; there is one long fellow from the hills below here, but nobody thinks that he is—possible, for her." And St. John laughed again.

It seemed to Frank's tortured heart that his laugh was filled with mockery and triumph. He started up, conscious that he was listening when he had no right. He had listened, impelled against his will, with the intense agony of one waiting for the last word or look of the dying. He flung himself out of the tent, tossed the pass-word to the shivering guard, and strode out in the cold night. Yet the laugh that stung him was provoked by the incredulous stare of St. John's soldier friend as he went on, "He is a diamond in the rough, though, and handsome, too, like a Viking or something outlandish. I tell you, they are unique; the MacGregor is just splendid. Bruce reminds one of a Saxon king before William brought over his Norman-French to quicken and weaken their strong physiques. And what a treasure Archie would be with his beauty and his clever wit in some circles I know. But there it is!

It takes his surroundings to make him what he is. Even the niggers quote Shakespeare, and present you problems in witchcraft. Nothing palls; it is wit highly spiced, from day to day!"

But Frank did not hear this; he was out with the stars; bright and cold they met his gaze, a hundred of them mocking like fiery eyes at defeat and the disappointments of man, where one gleamed calmly over the happy life with its dreams fulfilled. Could he hope to transplant his star, radiant and fine, to the work-a-day world in which he lived? Yes, he would say his star till he knew she belonged to another. The frosty air made him shiver. Tired and cold he reached camp just at tattoo, resolved on a sound night's sleep, and a leave of absence that would take him away from everybody—to his mother. The Scout procured his leave, Frank promising to rejoin his company as the army moved south. He struck out in the direction of home, and like Sir Launcelot in the wild forest, "he held no path." When he reached the gloomy Ozark hills, he began to watch for the trail on the ridge. By evening he was wearied with his long walk, but soothed with the loneliness of the forest; he entered the pretty valley at sunset that led to his home among the hills. The last gleams of light shone on the pines as the smoking chimneys welcomed him home.

But he had not shaken off the wild fancies that beset him; all the way they had danced about him,

and jeered at him for a failure, who stopped for a foggy breath. He thought of Lord Cranstone's dwarfish ape leaping about on his horse, that the Baron strove in dismay, to outride,

"But where he rode one mile, the dwarf ran four,  
And the dwarf was first at the castle door."

And now, he stood still to watch the wild race of his dog coming to meet him.

\* \* \* \* \*

Almost with her greeting, the mother missed something that belonged to her boy. The sunshiny presence that was a part of him.

He was quiet during supper, and let old Cornie come and go without any joke to upset her; she was plainly upset at the loss of it; and the dog followed him around in silent wonder.

Mrs. Truman told Frank of the Federals on his track when he was home last, how they had carried off horses, cattle and everything except the faithful Cornelia. "She came in that night, and sat down in a desolate hump till I told her it was all right, as they did not get my son, 'the rest is nothing,' I said cheerfully, and poor Cornie was ready by morning to assume life's duties manfully."

"Things begin to look dark for us," Frank said, "we will have to move again, the Federals are making desperate efforts to hold South Missouri."



"We will still hope; the precious rain comes from the darkest clouds."

"Yes," Frank assented, "but they will run us down."

"Why, Frank, I did not think you were so easily discouraged."

"I have lost no faith in the cause; it is just a time of—unbelief."

She looked at him an instant, with troubled eyes—"the goddess-mother's lament over the anguish she might not share"—creeping into them, then she answered,

"There is no unbelief!

Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod,  
And waits to see it grow, he trusts in God."

"Shall we not trust him with a great people?"

He looked at her with despairing eyes. "If you can, mother!"

"You have to! It is trust that bubbles from the throat of the lark in the glad songs of the morning; every mother-bird flies to its nestlings with the trust that finds them safe. As small a thing as the ivy is guided to the crevice where it clings and holds through wind and storm; shall a soul perish, a life be spoiled, because of one broken hope? For I know it is personal trial that jars you. I have always found you full of the courage that rises—to the mountain-

heights if needful—; some one has said it is the little things o'er which we stumble. Oh, Frank! step over them with the bounding step of my boy of old! I remember that you always fell on your feet when you had to fall. I will pray first that your life may be spared in the war, and next that you will meet it as we have planned it; I know that you will meet it like a man."

He raised his hand slowly, like the gesture of an old man. "Mother, it is not a little thing to see your life fall before you like a collapsing balloon 'as you stand holding the string.' Did you ever find yourself standing so?"

Her smile was undefinable as she answered, "Your father told me once that troubles rebounded from me like they struck against steel. Is not that safer than to fall before each blow? Imagine my life and yours, if I had allowed the weaker measure."

He looked at her, his head a little higher. "Oh mother, you have always been so brave, so true. I will throw it off, or climb over it, as you say; after all, it is only a cowardly fear of my fate, that dares not test it."

It was hard for her, with the pain in his eyes. "That is worse than I dreamed, for you to feel a fear. Don't ever be guilty of weakness—if it is—a woman. I read of a celebrated Grecian astronomer, gazing at the stars while he walked and fell into a ditch; an eye-witness said, 'he would read the skies and yet doesn't know what is at his feet.'

You are deifying a mortal, shrinking absurdly before some filmy net that it would be braver to break; then would your divinity come to your level, only a woman. Cast fear to the winds! Find in your own good time, the good that is in store for you, nor heed the little things that jar and fret."

"My problem rises above little things." Then after a long interval, "Mother, I have seen the one woman in the world who would rouse you to admiration. A lovely combination of the elegant and the natural, a strong character, with grace and beauty." He stopped, thinking how foolish that must sound to another, how tame it seemed to him.

His mother quoted,

"When things went wrong it was the brave man's part  
To turn the current back again, and wrest his prize  
from fate."

"These are the words of a wise man, and they are over two thousand years old."

"Yes," said Frank, "and love is older," with a feeble attempt at a joke, but his mother thought of the smile of a condemned man, looking down to meet the unturned faces "below the scaffold." She looked out into the night with a frown, and added, "But I wish you might have been let alone! You had enough to live through. It's the same old story; the wrong woman comes, or the right one comes at the wrong time, and they manage to make things 'gang aglee' for all the men worth killing."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

"And felt the sky reel back between the fire-shocks."

—*Mrs. Browning.*

Many Southern sympathizers, too old to join the **army**, were banished from the state, and forced to go, on **peril** of their lives. Many lived in caves or lonely huts in **the** deep woods, for months at a time. Many of these, refugees who could get no farther, were indebted to the generous people of St. Louis for helpful kindness. Many who lived through the prison life of the "New Bastile," as MacDowall's College was called in those days, owed their lives to the noble-hearted women of that city. They waited in vain for General Johnston to come to St. Louis; when discouraged, those strong enough to stand the hardships, found dangerous paths through the woods that led to Price's army. It was hard to count the perils through these woods, with the Federals pouring in on three sides of the state, and dissensions in every county.

While at Springfield, General Price made an effort to lessen the rigors of war for Missourians. After General Halleck was appointed commander of the Federal forces in the West, Price wrote to him calling his attention to usages in his army "that had never been practiced in civilized warfare,"

such as the arrest of peaceable citizens, who were treated as traitors, and trying captured soldiers by court-martial, instead of treating them as prisoners of war. He hoped to help his people with these terms, if he could make them, even if, as he feared, the chances of war should drive him from the state. He staid in Springfield till February, '62; by this time he was nearly hemmed between Curtis and troops from Kansas City, under Lane. Price retreated into Arkansas slowly, fighting all the way, as Curtis pursued them hotly as far as Cross Hollows.

General Price commended the courage of the gallant First Brigade in conducting this retreat, and spoke of it as a signal triumph under the hardships of the march. The weather was very cold, many of the men thinly clad, with old shoes or none. If they stopped to make fires, or cook for the starving soldiers, the enemy were upon them; they pushed on, marching and fighting, day and night, through snow and bitter cold, thinking less of their sufferings than of their homes left behind to their fate.

Our soldier boys from Branksome had been with Colonel Rives' regiment, First Missouri Brigade, since the organization under the Confederacy, and among the daring fighters who covered this retreat from Springfield to the Boston Mountains. As they went down into Stone County, the second day Archie tried in the first breathing spell to rouse his friends from the prevailing gloom. He felt that his efforts

should be rewarded; he hated cold and hunger with all his bright, boyish nature; he felt keenly for the poor fellows who had never been home all winter; many of them lived in North Missouri, and many, through six months of hardships, had no letter or word from home. During this sombre march, "Lark," as the soldiers called Archie, seemed, in his happy comradeship, the next blessed thing to warmth and sunshine, his songs woke them in the morning; and yet, his brave young heart was disturbed over Frank's unaccountable absence; he was lost without him. The Scout had told him that Frank would cut across and join them by the time they reached Crane Creek.

"I can't stand it much longer," Archie said to Bruce, "if these starving, freezing wretches don't get a chance to cook and rest; unless Frank comes, or we get to that Crane Creek, or something; are you tired, Bruce?" noting his brother's silent manner.

"You will smile," Bruce answered, "when I tell you what your question suggested. Jeannie Dean's interview with Queen Caroline, in the 'Heart of Mid-Lothian,' don't you remember? When the Queen expresses surprise that the poor little girl had trudged from Edinburgh to London, on foot, because of love for her sister; she could not understand such unselfishness."

"'And you walked all the way from Edinburgh to plead for the poor thing's life?' she asked in wonder."

Jeannie rested her earnest eyes on the Queen's face as she said pathetically, 'May ye never hae sea weary a heart, that ye canna be sensible o' the weariness o' the limbs.' " Bruce continued after a pause, "It is one of the finest things in literature; strange that it should come to me here! I can picture the whole scene. The Queen's surprise that the Scotch girl impressed her so, the serious face of the great Argyle, fearful a little, of Jeannie's blunt honesty, yet proud of her too; and Jeannie's eyes wandering over the fine old garden, all unconscious that she has said an unusual thing, and that to the Queen of England."

Archie listened, thinking less of Jeannie's sorrows than of Bruce's special weariness of heart over leaving home. They stopped to camp, and made fires that cheered the benumbed soldiers as they gathered round the slow flames.

"This is fine," exclaimed Archie. "Fire and supper! just think of it! Crane Creek is all right! and we have the greatest 'Price' in the world in front of us, with invincible 'Gates' in the rear, with a Colonel that 'Rives' the nearest foe, and a Captain that 'Wades' into fire, if need be, and, and,"—when a slap on the shoulder interrupted his floundering pun on "Burbridge;" he jumped up to ring Frank Truman's hearty hands. In the midst of his cheer for "Crane Creek" the cannon boomed in the rear; they snatched

up the half-cooked food, and pushed on, to march and fight all night.

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General McCullough, with his brave Texans, had joined Price on the march, and at Cove Creek they met General Van Dorn, who was commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department. He urged an immediate attack on Curtis; Price and McCullough opposed it, but yielded to the superior officer. After the disasters of the **day at Pea Ridge**, or Elkhorn Tavern, the boys remembered their opposition to the attack, the sadder to remember as the gallant Ranger went to his death on that bloody day. An officer of Price's army, writing afterwards of this discouraging March day, spoke of the "terrible force of McCullough's charging squadrons;" said he could hear above the roar of artillery the war-whoop and hideous yells of McCullough's Indians, as they dashed into the fray whirling their knives. The Federals were well posted, fighting stoutly, and at them rushed the Southerners: Texans, Louisianians and Missourians, standing up with Arkansas to hold their ground, doggedly contesting every foot, swaying back and forth in this vortex of fire, till Gen. McCullough fell, then Gen. MacIntosh. Just when the whole line was elated with hopes of victory, when Van Dorn was praising the magnificent courage of the Missouri troops, the message reached him of the death of the two Generals. And out—



"Through the great, gray slope of men,"

the Federal artillery went charging. This same officer witnessed the artillery charge in which the brave young Churchill Clark of St. Louis was killed, as he stood exposed and undaunted, sighting his guns for another fire at the advancing foe, already too near him. Archie MacGregor saw the brave young face carried away with the cannon ball, and turned his face to see their beloved Colonel Rives struck by a minie ball. It was no time or place to stop. Archie was separated from Bruce and Frank. Alone, an instant he stood, his bright face and golden hair a sure target; the next, he fell.

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The army pushed on to begin the memorable retreat, so cleverly managed, the boys did not know it was a retreat till they were beyond the Federal lines. Both sides claimed the victory; the Federals lost more in killed and lost valuable pieces of artillery, but they made a gallant stand when the Southerners were wavering, through the loss of officers and lack of ammunition. But for this miscarriage of the wagons, the old settlers tell you it would have been the battle of the war; and would have settled the contest in the West.

An orderly of General Price, captured afterwards at Memphis, said Price opposed the attack on Curtis, and heard him say to Van Dorn after the battle,

"We should have staid in Springfield; we could not possibly have been whipped worse than we have been here."

The retreat was almost a victory; if the Federal victory was great, it was an enigma to see it followed with no pursuit.

## CHAPTER XIX.

"And the women are weeping and wringing their hands,  
For those who will never come back to the town."

—*Charles Kingsley.*

The soldiers marched southward with heavy hearts, saddened with the loss of officers and friends on that dreary battlefield.

It has grown to be a tradition of the war, how the body of Churchill Clark was saved by his Indian friend, who had fought by his side through the war. He stood over the grave at Fort Smith, with the dignity of his race, but the war held nothing else for this strange creature. In the gloom of the night he left them, to be seen no more in battle or march.

Bruce and Frank met after the retreat was over, and looked at each other unsteadily.

"What is it; do you know anything? Oh, Bruce, you are wounded, and where is Archie? Have you heard anything of him?"

"No, we must go back, or I must; nobody has seen him."

It was late when they got permission to go back to the Ridge; the army had skirted around the enemy in the retreat. Bruce and Frank thought they could

cut across, and reach Elkhorn in a few miles. Fatigued with two days' fighting, loss of sleep and the long, rough tramp over the hills, they saw the need of stopping for supper. They came unexpectedly upon a little hut, that looked more lonely for the lonely and miserable specimen of humanity standing in front of it. He was lean, long and crooked, with a thin "goatee" like the inverted spout of a teapot. He was listless, as with a dogged dare to fate to do her worst, if there was anything worse she could do. "It seems useless to tackle him," said Frank, "but I see no other house!" advancing a little to see if this lord of all around him would show some sign of life.

"Hello, stranger! Can you give us a bite to eat while we rest? My friend is wounded, and must have both."

He moved his hollow eyes when Frank said wounded, and drawled lazily, "Duz this here look like a place whar they'd be any thing to eat?"

"I suppose you live on something."

"Do I look like it?" in a tone that was unanswerable.

Silence for a minute, then Bruce asked, "Can you tell us anything of the Federal army? If they have gone back to Missouri?"

He looked around furtively, his uneasiness increasing as he took in his questioner's large proportions; it took a long time for his glance to travel from

Bruce's head to his feet; then, "Do youins belong to ole Mr. Price's company?" This was the usual question in the backwoods.

"We do!" Bruce replied solemnly.

"What ye want over here then?"

"Bruce," cried Frank impatiently, "we are finding nothing to eat, and this man is slowly shaping into an interrogation point. Besides, we may have to cross White River in the night!"

At this the man roused a little. "Hits the durndest, crookedest river in the durndest, crookedest kentry 'at ever I seen. What d' youins cross hit fur?"

"What is your country, stranger?"

"Nauth Kyarliny!" His poor, worn face softened a little at the name, and he added, "I come out huh to git out'n the war; what d' ye think I've got into?"

"What do you think?" Frank questioned back.

"Don't ast me." As if the dreary acceptance of fate that belonged to his kind, precluded any further trouble.

"Well, the Feds will pass by you on the way to Springfield soon!"

He raised his head a little. "They won't pass by me. I will be up in the mounting thar, when they pass."

The soldiers raised up to start, and Bruce said pleasantly, "We have rested a minute, friend, we thank you for that; we must go."

The lonesome man stared at the strong figures

whose energetic strides were carrying them rapidly out of sight, and grumbled something about "dad blamed quality," as he turned to go to his roost on the mountain side.

The next neighbor gave them supper and place to rest, but they were up to start before the dawn; Bruce recalled Archie's tender eyes as he had quoted Jeannie Dean's words: "May ye never hae sae weary a heart that ye canna be sensible o' the weariness o' the limbs," as he carried his own, so heavily, back to the scene of the battle. As they left the woods for the open heights of the ridge, there were little glints of light between the hills. Frank's keen eyes were scanning a clump of underbrush close by the way they had come; he pulled Bruce back a little. "I saw a man go in the woods down there; stop till we see who he is." The man came out, a Confederate surgeon, in full uniform. They sprang up in sight and Bruce exclaimed, with a shout of relief, "My little Paul Hayes, by all that is wonderful."

"What in the world are you doing here, Bruce? Don't you know you are running a foolish risk?"

"Archie is missing, and we did not know it till after the retreat."

Frank told the doctor of the wounded side, and he examined it with a frown. "I never heard of such a piece of insanity; you have fever now," preparing to dress the wound. "And you are going to hunt Archie! Well, I am on a similar mission. Will was

wounded very badly, in the first day's fight—shot through the lungs; that drew me back to this place of horrors."

'Oh! the pity of it," Bruce exclaimed; "do you remember him, Frank? the little fellow with big, brown eyes, whose fearless fighting called our attention at Lexington."

"I have never seen their brightness dimmed but once during the war," continued the doctor. "He thought he was going to die, but implored me to go back to my duties on the field. 'You can't do me any good, and you are needed at your post; you must go, Paul.' Not a word of that burning ball that cut through his slender body, not a word of the torture that followed as he lay there waiting for me to find him. Then he added, 'If you do not find me alive, when all is over, tell our father.' He stopped, gazed at me a moment with misty eyes, and—I slipped out." Then he went on, "That same day General Price was wounded, as you know; I was dressing his arm when the messenger came from Will. 'I will excuse you,' the General said, 'go to Will, and don't let him die.'"

All this time the doctor was finding pockets in miraculous places, from which he pulled little bundles of lunch. "I see you boys are hungry," placing it in three portions as carefully as he would measure out medicine. "We will just eat our breakfast while we talk ways and means a little; the Scout came to me last night, with word that Will was suffering and per-

haps dying; I had a time getting off; asked General Price for a pass, and he fairly raved over such folly. There was an officer coming from Van Buren with a flag of truce, but he said it was General Davidson's special orders not to bring back any doctors, they are all d——m spies. When he had gone, Price turned to me, 'Are you satisfied?'

"'No,' I replied, 'my brother is dying for want of care. I will risk my chances to get back in their lines, with your permission.'

"'What would your father say if his boy was killed for a spy with my permission? I am afraid you will be killed,' he said, frowning down at me contemptively. Then he added, 'When this trouble is over, I hope to account to your father for his boys, and hope to do it handsomely.'

"'I enlisted for what fortune brings me in the discharge of duty,' I ventured to say, 'and the boy must be saved.' He turned to his secretary and said curtly, 'Write a pass through my lines for this stubborn doctor!' So here I am! I went into the bushes, and donned my surgeon's clothes, but I must watch sharply, I tell you! But, seriously, Bruce, it is folly for you boys to try to go in the lines, if the Federals stay at Elk Horn; you would be hanged for spies; they would gloat at court-martial, over two such magnificent specimens of Southern manhood. I'll take Archie's case in my hands if you will trust me; somebody will know if he was killed; I will find him if alive."



"But how will we know?" Bruce inquired. "Oh, Paul! I am so afraid they have heard the news at home! God help us over the disasters of Pea Ridge."

"I think the Federals will retreat in a day or two. Stay quietly about here, and I will come back. You will find friends in the little house down there; tell them I sent you, and keep quiet; you can scoot to the hills when you see the Feds. Good-bye. I go—with a heart for any fate!"

Bruce looked after him. "There goes a white soul; he is clean of wrong toward his fellow-man, and ever ready to help those in trouble. I would rather have met him this day, than any man in Price's army. He may go to his own death but he will go to his duty."

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Dr. Hayes' adventures in getting through the lines, as related by himself after the war, revealed the heroic efforts these boys made for cause and friends. In reply to the question of how he got through the lines he said, "I was riding along to the camp when a Federal Major over-took me with his big, nigger servant on horseback.

"Good morning, doctor," he said, "where are you moving your wounded?"

"Realizing that all was lost, with hesitation, I answered promptly, 'Bentonville. I had come through Fayetteville, and none were there.'

"Oh yes, I heard that. And what is your name?" "I told him, my real name, of course. He rode up

beside me, scanning my face attentively as he replied, 'It is the name of my bosom friend through life. Not the same family, I presume. He is now governor of Illinois.'

" 'We are cousins,' I told him. He questioned me closely and seemed pleased when he found me familiar with the family names. 'My name is Reynolds,' he added politely, 'get in and go with me to camp.'

"I felt as if a mountain above me had lightened. I had been through many tight places; troubles like the present over wounded prisoners, and others not trifling, with shot and shell. In this grave crisis, I had placed my trust in Providence and started in blindly; now, it seemed that my relationship to the genial republican governor of Illinois was to help me in a grave emergency. Now for the next boulder in my path. Maj. Reynolds, as Gen. Davidson's adjutant, had the list of prisoners for exchange, and mine not on it, but fate was kind. Maj. Reynolds was ordered to Little Rock next morning, in the hurry of departure his list was overlooked, so I was in the Federal lines without permission. Joe Shelby was scouting around east of us, playing with his cannon, the day before the exchange of prisoners was to come off. Davidson thought he was being cut off from Springfield and started back hurriedly and I was left to take care of my wounded friends till they could be moved to Van Buren. The Federals treated us kindly, but did not feed their prisoners. The good

women of Pea Ridge came nobly to our aid; they were stripped of everything save a little corn, of this they made lye hominy and fed us generously till we could remove our wounded.

\* \* \* \* \*

The doctor rode boldly into camp and found his sick friends all but Archie; he found his brother very low, calling for Paul, half-unconsciously, he opened his eyes at his brother's gentle touch, then turned his pallid face to the wall silently. A slender girl, her eyes dimmed at the eloquent sadness of the action, was standing by the cot. "Mother had him brought out here when she heard he was dying," she said to the doctor softly.

The doctor, naturally a gallant man, encouraged her to talk and help him in many ways. One day when the wounded soldier was sleeping, they sat down by the fire. "I am so glad you came, doctor. I have heard so much of you and know we can depend upon you; the suffering is horrible, with no men to help; the desolation is like that of the cyclone's path. Every day we have some one coming to search for the wounded or dead; yesterday I saw a sight most pitiful, a negro boy came to beg something to eat, said he had searched two days for his young master; he was riding a splendid young horse, which he had kept hidden, he said till the Feds moved. I thought him such a strange, ugly creature while he ate voraciously, but he turned, at starting, thanked

me courteously and said, 'I must go to my work, my honor is passed to the MacGregor to bring his son home and I must find him.'

Dr. Hayes started, "Oh! I know whom he seeks," and he told her of the brother who had waited for news of Archie. "I hope though, he may be among the prisoners sent on to Springfield and may have been stunned and only slightly wounded."

"In that case he would write," she said with troubled eyes.

The doctor had gone to Bruce and urged them to leave. "You can't do Archie any good, and I do not think he is here; if he is, we will do every thing for him." He dressed the wounded side, and made Bruce promise to follow the army.

"And Paul, find out the truth about Ellis Gray and let me know."

"He was killed," the doctor answered, "and buried beyond Elk Horn, I marked his grave for you."

"Poor fellow," Bruce said gently, "he was so noble and so good. He was petted at home, had plenty of money and friends and everything to make him enjoy life, and now, hurled out into the cold and dark, empty-handed, with no friends to flatter, nobody at all out of a world he would have made so happy. And Helen was the idol of his life."

The surgeon got up gravely, "Yes, but this is war!"

"It is a wicked, infernal thing!" Bruce replied.

## CHAPTER XX.

"Dead! Both my boys! When you sit at the feast,  
And are wanting a great song for Italy free,  
Let none look at me!"

—*Mrs. Browning.*

In the meantime, the news had reached Springfield; the first day it was reported a great victory, the next brought the loss of officers and men and demoralizing results from the miscarriage of ammunition. Among the killed, in a list sent to Branksome, was the name of Ellis Gray; among the missing, Bruce and Archie MacGregor. The MacGregor went to his room and closed the door on his agony. Mrs. Gray was prostrated, recovering from one swoon to fall into another; once she recognized Faith's pale face and shrieked aloud, "I know they are killed! Oh! I am choking to death!"

Aunt Dilsie called Faith from the room. "She is better off, honey, once she gets over this hysterical stage, she will be so worn out she will rest from exhaustion. But my bairn, I must do something for you, what can I do?"

"Oh! You can do something for me Aunt Dilsie, I am shocked and grieved over Mr. Gray's death, but I will never give Archie up till I know; why, I

can't! It would be just taking the heart out of me! I am going to him at once, just as soon as I can start. Bruce will take care of him if he is with him, Bruce is all right, something tells me that Archie is dying or wounded. I feel it and I must go!"

The poor old woman knew the danger of such a journey, but dared not go to the master; trembling violently, she sank to a chair, covered her face with her hands and rocked back and forth, moaning, "Oh! This house that I have been with so long."

Faith was astonished into forgetfulness for a moment, then said gravely, "Aunt Dilse, this will never do, I depend on you in our time of trouble to help us. I have never looked to you in vain, you must think now, you must do everything for father and Helen, do not tell them till I am gone. I will find Archie or Bruce, and perhaps I can nurse them, do not fear for me." She stopped at the sound of a horse coming rapidly, and saw Mrs. Turner galloping towards the house, her little sorrel flecked with foam.

"Oh! Mrs. Turner, do you know anything for certain?"

"Nothin' about Archie. Mr. Gray was killed the first day; Luke Patton saw Bruce after the battle; Luke was excited, was wounded hisself, an' a prisoner, but creeped out of the tent and took a bee line for home. I wanted to do somethin' for you all,"

she kept repeating as she held the girlish, quivering figure in her arms.

"You can help us a great deal, Mrs. Turner; I am going to look for Archie and take care of him. I want you to go with me, perhaps you know the road a part of the way."

"I know it all the way," positively.

"Then we will go at once, before father knows; could your horse stand the trip, do you think?"

"Better'n any, you get the best hoss on the place to go with him."

"Do you hear Monk?" Monk stood by the fireplace, like an immovable bronze figure, there to support the mantle, "get me the best horse on the farm! And Dilse, hunt me some linen rags and jellies or anything that is needed for the sick or wounded."

When the MacGregor learned that Faith had been gone three hours, his wrath awed the household. "How did she go?" to Monk.

"She told me to get her the best horse on the place, sir."

"And you saddled Queen for such a trip as that?"

"She said it with a way, sir, that I obeyed, I didn't stop to think!"

"She is worth a thousand dollars," the MacGregor said sternly.

"She will be worth ten thousand," Monk answered hotly, "if she brings Miss Faith or Archie safe home." And thinking that he had come out ahead, he grinned

as the MacGregor turned to Dilse. "Why did you not call me?"

"She told me not to, sir."

"You knew better, if she did. Of course I will have to follow on, and go with her."

Dilse straightened her tall form and her eyes looked as he remembered them forty years before. "If you will think a little, you will not go, sir, Miss Helen is prostrated and looks like death. I don't want the 'sponsibility of her life on my hands. Faith will go through all right, an' be in less danger without you. You don't want them Hessians to wipe out the whole family, do you? An' she'd Miss Turner with her, who knows all the way; an' I never see a pluckier woman! An' the baby color done left Faith's face too! She carried bandages an' jellies an' they was goin' to Miss Truman's to-night."

The MacGregor stood in a study. Monk said with a great show of humility, "I think Mrs. Turner will take care of the horse, sir."

"Damn the horse, get out of here!" and Monk knew that he had come out ahead; he was called back at once. "Would you know how to follow them?"

"Certainly. I would go to Mrs. Truman's on Finley Creek, to-night too."

"What horse could make it? It is twenty miles and now 2 o'clock."



"Prince would follow his mother, sir," Monk replied slyly.

"Then saddle him and go; if you meet the Feds—"

"Trust me with them, sir, I will talk like a nigger to them."

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"We will go to a little village on Pinley Creek to-night," Mrs. Turner was saying to Faith as they rode along, "I know everybody, an' we'll git there easy 'gins' sun-down."

Mrs. Truman welcomed them cordially, she was full of sympathy over the young stranger's trouble and was greatly surprised that the delicate girl had summoned courage for this perilous ride. Faith was watching her too; she was slender, with dark hair and greenish-gray eyes that looked familiar. "Her's are the 'she eagle eyes,'" Faith was saying to herself, the yellow lights will come into them on occasion.

Mrs. Turner rose to go. "I will stay with some old friends to-night, Faith, and be here early in the mornin' to start; we are soldiers now."

"She seemed earnest and brave," Mrs. Truman said, "I didn't use to think there was much to her, with that gossipy way about her."

"Oh! she is so good, so helpful, and was ready and eager to come with me, brave and self-reliant, she knows just what to do. I shall always love her for her kindness, and she is true to the core, she has her

little odd manner, though she is charming to me."

Mrs. Truman watched Mrs. Turner's advocate intently, and said to herself, "It is she, just the woman to bring the boy's madness; he would never succumb to a doll." After supper she made Faith comfortable on the couch. "You are tired and nervous and must rest, if you want to talk you may tell me about the news you had from the army. I have not heard a word from Frank yet; Luke Patton is confident that he saw Bruce after the battle, he thinks that Frank is with Bruce or Archie." Then after a pause, "Frank was to see me as the army went south and was depressed and unhappy, I hope if he has lived through this awful battle, that he will conclude it is something—merely to live." Watching Faith as she talked.

"He was to see you then; he went away without coming to bid us goodbye, and—Archie was greatly discouraged."

"He was in trouble and he came to me." The mother said quietly.

"The world is full of it," Faith clasped her hands over her eyes and lay there a long time, catching her breath now and then in a sob.

It occurred to Mrs. Truman that she was called on of late, to encourage the young, who had so much to be hopeful for, while her courage stayed by her because she would never let it go.

Both started on hearing a resounding rap on the side door.

"Hits a black monnymment at the door," Cornie slipped in with white circles around her eyes, "I peeped out!"

"I suppose Cornie means a statue," Mrs. Truman explained as she went out. "Why its Monk!" The monument outside doffed his cap and stretched his lips into a curious smile that looked as immovable as the smile of a mummy, when Faith came up behind her. "Why Monk! what is the matter?"

"Nothin' only the MacGregor sent me to take care of you and Queen."

"My father is always to be depended upon," Faith said proudly, "still I ran away and would not trust him. It seemed so wild a thing to do, yet I felt that I must come." Turning to Monk, "you must get some place to stay."

"He will stay right here, and Cornie will give him his supper and a bed."

Monk turned to Cornie, nearly giving her another turn, while he had misgivings as to whether she would get supper in time to suit him. Mrs. Truman went to see if Cornie was equal to the occasion; she stopped at the surprising flow of conversation that assailed her through the open door.

"You see—um—madam," Monk was saying to Cornie, "these are extraordinary times, and we didn't think it advisable for Miss MacGregor to travel un-

attended, when knights of old went on long journeys they had trains of servants or followers, so also with ladies of quality! I don't know"—with a grave bow—"if you ever heard of the wonderful adventures of Richard the Lion-hearted. Ah! there was a man for you! a warrior as well as king, in a time when the Crusades were shaking the world!" Throwing out his arms in dramatic sweep and lowering his voice impressively, "and let me tell you in confidence, even this great king was not so busy a fighting that he did not have time to find a princess that he married on an island on the road, and if there is anything of this kind planned against the daughter of the MacGregor, why, I am here to defend the house!" Then he launched out on his high strain again, "you must have heard, Mrs.—ah—"

Cornie mumbled something feebly and Monk went on with a flourish, "Ah! Mrs. Washington! A grand name! there's a nigger named Washington in every house in the United States." (Cornie admitted it in helpless silence, though she had never been so aspiring), "you must have heard, Mrs. Washington, of the astonishing deeds of Orlando and his magic horn, its blasts sent men to life or death as he thought fit, that was witch-craft, of course! By the way, we have a witch at Branksome who can accomplish a good deal in a confusing way, the MacGregor says it is the 'might of intellect' in her or astrology, he says things of that kind to stuff

me, you know, and she can read the stars, no mistake about that. But that old nigger's power is the power of the devil and the work of witches."

He had thought his audience listless, he was satisfied now with the climax. Cornie's eyes were bulging, her whole being in a state of collapse over the startling episode in her even life, capped off with the existence of a real witch within a day's travel of her, "an' what's a day's travel to a witch" she asked herself in horror. All this time she had been trying to "set the table." Monk, though hungry, enjoying his talk and her state of fright. She motioned him to the table, with dumb politeness.

Monk threw down his cap. "I thank you, fairest of women, though I would like a little more tongue," he added, seriously, as he sat down and looked hard at a small dish before him.

"Hit ain't tongue, its sassage," she hurried out to the pantry to get more. Monk indulged in one of his silent fits of laughter when her back was turned, then attacked the supper.

Mrs. Truman, who had had her handkerchief to her mouth for some time, tripped away, feeling that it was a relief from the high tension of the last eight months.

## CHAPTER XXI.

"And some kept back their riches for themselves, and brought tinsel, and showy cloths of no value, to hang on the walls of the King's house."

Mrs. Turner came early next morning, plainly dissatisfied over Monk's arrival. "Two women would get along on a trip of this kind much better without a groom on a fine hoss. There'll be no end of trouble with him, if the Feds have possession of the Pea Ridge country."

Faith was firm. "No, he must go, as papa sent him. We will be very cautious, dear Mrs. Turner, and let circumstances guide us. Monk will watch for blue-coats, he can see them like an eagle, and Monk, don't forget now, to play your role of ignorant nigger if they get you. Papa said you acted the part splendidly. And above all, take care of the horses."

"Now pick your road," Mrs. Turner said at starting; "we can go the mail route on the ridge, with danger from soldiers, or we can keep east of it, by crossin' creeks and rough roads, besides the James to cross."

"Take the rough road by all means, and leave the other to the soldiers." Faith said as she mounted the spirited "Queen." They rode out through grand forests of pine, their dark needles falling thickly

around them in the March wind; through beautiful valleys that stretched away into little green points that mounted the steep hill-sides; great cedars hung heavily from the bluffs above them, their steep sides ribbed in gray and yellow. Faith felt the awe-inspiring grandeur of nature, unbroken and absolute. Mrs. Turner had ridden through forests all her life and rode straight ahead, watching only for danger.

They traveled through a valley road across brooks that tumbled from one plane to another, as they leaped down the hill-sides, to the ford across the James. Mrs. Turner turned to wait for Monk.

"You are here as guide, you may try this ford."

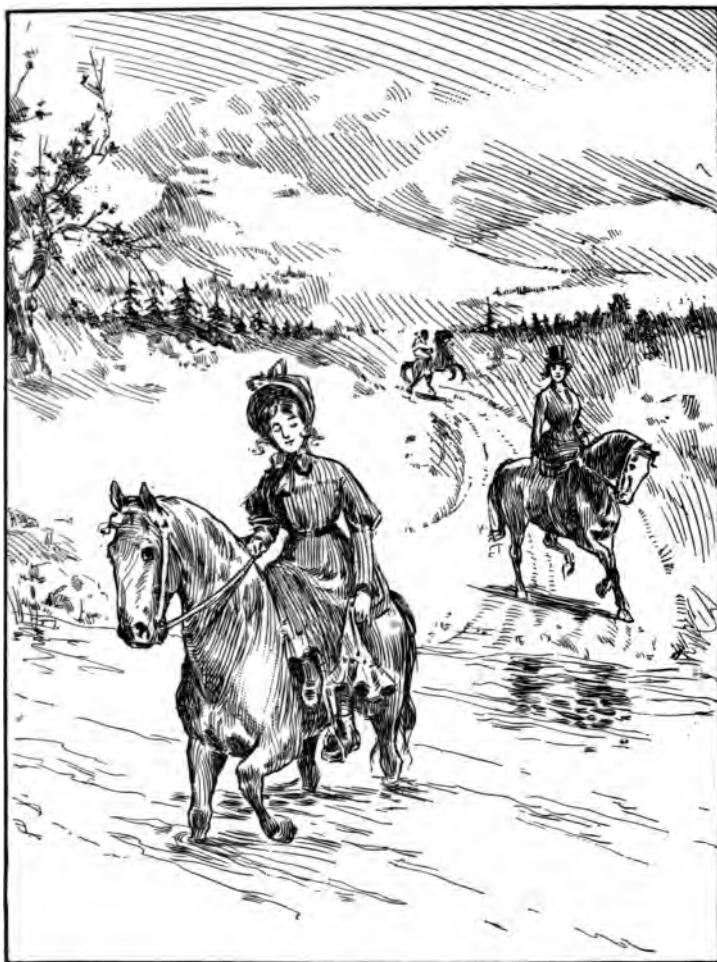
Poor Monk! he had listened to tales of adventure all his life and cursed the fate that gave him skin and form that never graced a cavalier, and here he was, at a supreme moment, with two ladies, a wide stream before him and Prince, a fool about water; he had laid it to Dilse at home, now he must try his metal. Prince stepped in gingerly, flung up his head, then his forefeet, whirled suddenly and stepped out. Monk caught Mrs. Turner's smile as her black eyes watched him with exasperating calmness.

Mrs. Turner whispered to Faith, "It is nothin' to cross, the water is very deceiving," and gathering up her skirts, started Cricket into the water, her small feet in her coarse shoes looking like the two weights in our "Grandfather's Clock."

Monk struck Prince with sudden fury, a blow that

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"Mrs. Turner started across, her small feet, in her coarse shoes, looking like the weights in our grandfather's clock,"—Chapter 21.

smashed the prerogatives of royalty and sent him plunging into the creek like any common hack. Faith looked over the water to the dark woods beyond and felt a chill creeping over her, only reassured in part, by Mrs. Turner's whisper; she gathered up her habit, she stiffened herself in the saddle, she thought of Archie, she thought of everything to help her resolve to reach that farther bank, but she trembled when the water touched her feet and reached the bank with a face so white Mrs. Turner looked at her sharply. "We'll rest a minnit, we will go thereckly, if that nigger is done cavortin' around there, no tellin' how many times we'll have to cross this river. I'll put him through some places that'll teach him to laugh like people, 'stid of a nape."

"We think at home that his smile is funny," Faith replied.

Monk rode along meekly, thinking that he had under-estimated Mrs. Turner, perhaps. Mrs. Turner liked of all things to lay plans, she was saying to Faith, "If you could fix yourself up so that you wouldn't look so scrumptious, I'll take you behind me and we'll find Archie and they will not bother us nuther. I'll tie an old scarf on my head, get a tin bucket to carry milk to the soldiers in, an' we'll look like two old settlers."

"Oh, I'll fix any way," answered Faith, gratefully. "I will tie something over my head, too, if you say so." But she did not like to ride behind and reflected

on how easy the little nag's fox-trot looked, and how curious it might feel from her perch behind Mrs. Turner, if they saw the need of mounting tandem.

Mrs. Turner startled her with the exclamation: "I hear soldiers!"

Cricket's head was up, and Monk cried: "I see 'em!"

"And here we are, like three rats in a trap." Then, turning her head to look back at Monk, without stopping: "You turn and ride as hard as you can, if they take us prisoners; they can't catch you, and we'll be safer without you. They won't hurt a nigger, but you can save your master's horse if you try; get out of sight and circle around, so's to find us; go!"

The two ladies were riding leisurely when the scouting party met them. The officer reined up, after a gallant salute. "Where are you going?"

Mrs. Turner was spokesman. "To see some kin-folks over yonder."

"Where do you live?"

"Over on Finley Creek."

"Did you meet any one?"

"No, nobuddy but a foolish nigger!"

"How do you know he was foolish?"

"By his looks!"

"What is your name?"

"Turner!"

"This your daughter?"

"No, my niece, Miss Simpson."

"Where does she live?" his eyes noting Faith's trim, furred figure, and fine saddle horse.

"Over here in Stone county. I am taking her home from Finley."

"This is Stone county," said the officer, sharply.

"We hain't seen no county line," innocently, "an' wouldn't know it if we did!"

"Then you may cross it easier on your way back to Finley Creek instead of going south. We have had trouble enough with women spies and reporters down here, and we are not going to have any more of it. We will go with you to Finley Creek."

Mrs. Turner's black eyes flashed. "We are neither spies nor reporters, and where we are going is nobody's business!"

"I will make it mine; permit me." Reaching out to her bridle to turn the horse. He called to one of his men. "Take eight men and go after that boy, and take him to Springfield."

"Law-me!" ejaculated Mrs. Turner, "eight men to go after a silly boy an' a colt." Then she looked hard at Faith and motioned her to turn.

Desperate, baffled, Faith thought of resisting, but concluded they might take her horse, and leave her in the woods. She tied her veil closer, turned slowly, while the officer looked on coolly, and the men stared waiting.

Mrs. Turner saw they were strangers to the ford,

when they stopped at the bank. The officer looked over the stream. "There is a road, of course."

"Do you all want to cross?" Mrs. Turner asked of the halting men, and then plunged briskly into the river. The officer swore under his breath as they followed, and Faith heard a half-whisper above the swish of the water, "Blamed if there's any 'Simpson' about her," and she felt with burning cheeks that she had acted wisely in not resisting.

Mrs. Turner pointed to a house on a high bluff, and said, curtly: "We stop here, if you please."

"How do you get there, I'd like to know."

"No matter; you don't have to know. You have marched two women twelve miles outen their way, an' I hope it'll comfort you; no doubt you'll find many things in this section that do not." Then, with a "farwell" that was good-humored as well as derisive, she gave Cricket a sharp cut, and they cantered around the base of the hill. When out of sight they stopped and listened. "They've gone, at a gallop, got enough of us; and now tell me; I know these people up here, not very friendly, but they would not harm us. It's four miles to Mrs. Truman's. Shall we go on? Can you?"

"By all means," Faith answered; "we can find if she has heard from Frank to-day." X

\* \* \* \* \*

"Yes," Mrs. Turner said to Mrs. Truman, "we are mighty well out of it, I tell you. I didn't like the

looks of them fellows much. We will go back in the mornin' if Faith says so!" And she started off to spend the night with a friend and find out what was going on among the people on Finley. Later, when Mrs. Truman had made Faith comfortable on the couch, she said to her: "I wouldn't despair, my dear. You have done all you could. If Archie is a prisoner you will hear from him soon, if——" she paused in pity for the suffering in Faith's eyes, as she exclaimed: "If I should find him dead—oh, I could not bear it." Mrs. Truman looked a long time at x Tired and hungry, they traveled the long road back. Faith thought of Archie's exposure in the army and how bravely he had borne it.

the firelight; then she asked: "Shall I tell you a story, dear?"

Faith nodded.

"A story of a story—or, rather, an allegory that I read some years ago, in a magazine. (Harper's, I think; I wish I knew the author.)

"It was a story of many people gathered into a great building, or vast inn by the seashore. It was a place of reckoning where all accounts were to be settled, with one day of preparation for a last voyage. It had many doors of entrance. One grand archway, a second door wreathed in flowers, a heavy oaken door, and a small one, mean and low, entwined with brambles.

Inside the rooms differed as widely. Handsome y

= Narrow passages led down to the one gate of de-  
X with fountain and orange trees, were occupied by a  
beautiful princess, who rode through the high arch-  
way, with her gay retinue of followers, heralded by  
the sound of trumpets and followed by an admiring  
throng.

Next came a train of gay young men and maid-  
ens, who entered the flowery porch, and they danced  
and sang through this strange day as they had done  
through lives of song and laughter.

Within the strong gate of oak came the men who  
were burdened with the cares of life, one carrying  
his tools, another his ledger and a bag of gold.

A poor widow with three children went in by the  
gate of thorns and was conducted to the common  
hall.

The inn was kept by a great king, and the mean-  
est part of the hall was chosen for the office of the  
king's son, who kept the book of reckoning; and  
out of his own wealth provided sums sufficient to  
settle all the accounts of the penniless travelers. He  
only asked an honest reckoning, and warned them to  
be ready, lest the summons come for the last voy-  
age and found them unprepared. They were told  
to have ready a white raiment to wear away and  
they were to search among the lowliest places for  
pearls to form the border. "And there was no  
other payment received in that inn, but the unsearch-  
able riches of the king's son." =

✓ apartments, hung with cloth of gold, a marble court ✕  
✓ parture, a fearful place hewn from the solid rock, and  
over its threshold brooded sorrow and mourning and  
silence. No stir of life reached it, no sound save the  
hollow moan of the sea as it beat against the damp  
walls. It was dark and chill, the heavy dew falling  
from matted vines and weeds.

A pitying voice cried to the steward: "If there  
is only one gate, why is it made so terrible?" And  
he answered: "This gate was once a place of beauty;  
but the people defaced it, till poisonous weeds grew  
in their tracks and serpents lurked in the ruins; and  
the fear of the gate held travelers in bondage. But  
the king's son visited the inn and went out at the  
gate and cleared the way for them. The serpent  
stung him in the side, the thorns pierced his feet, but  
he routed them out and passed through; since then  
the 'gate has been open to all.'" "When once be-  
yond the gloomy portal, there is no recall," the serv-  
ant said. "Only the prince returned when his work  
beyond was finished. There was the sound of a  
mighty struggle, and a cry rang out through the  
vault, but he yielded not; thorn by thorn, he rooted  
out the evil."

While the steward was entreating them to be ready  
a cry arose, and they saw the ship coming. A shad-  
ow-y messenger came up to the poor widow and took  
her youngest child, and it fell in his arms asleep; the  
mother said: "He is not lost, but gone before."



There were grumblers who complained of their fare and asked the steward "what they had to be thankful for." He answered: "For the passport that will admit you into the haven."

He reproached the gay revelers who mocked at the poor, "for many of them are clothed for the ocean path." When he would speak to the beautiful princess, her courtiers shouted in derision, and told him to carry his questions to the herd in the hall below. So she lived in pomp and light and love, and the fair young Agnor, ever at her side, lived for her alone.

One day at noon, darkness spread over the sea, and they saw the ship of the great King coming. When it sailed away, they heard a voice ring out through the narrow passageway to the dark gate, as the young princess cried: "Hast thou seen him, my friend, my Agnor, with whom I hoped to take my journey to the land of the great King? Did he pass this way? He could not go and leave me thus alone! He was not ready; he had so much to do for me, for all—he cannot have been summoned yet! Tell me—oh, tell me, where is he?"

The king's servant led her to the gate through which Agnor had just gone, and he looked not back, even at the piteous cry: "Come back to me, oh, Agnor, come back!" And she knelt where the bleak winds struck on her bosom like lead.

She met the messenger once again, the agony of

a mortal fear in her eyes at memories of the power and example to be accounted for, "the higher the place the greater the responsibility." When the King's treasurer asked of her later, "Where is thy flock that was given thee?" she blushed and answered: "Lo, I have left all and followed thee!" and her throne on earth was left to envy, bickerings and strife to win the highest place.

A great storm broke over the sea, and the waters swept through the halls. At this the great and the rich asked: "Why are annoyances, meant for the mean and poor, permitted to disturb our palace chambers?"

And the revelers asked: "Why do the fruits turn to ashes, and blight and decay come to all?"

The faithful sought to repair the King's house, while "some kept back their riches for themselves and brought tinsel and showy cloth of no value, to hang on the walls."

"Yet nothing entereth into this city that maketh a lie."

The great schemer, who had heaped his gold, was called before he was ready, and the cry of those he had robbed rang in his ears, 'till he went to the "slave-ship," where he could pay all he owed. (It seemed that the "slave ship" was the place of expiation, where sins unforgiven were to be atoned for, before they could enter the King's house for the last voyage to a world of peace.) While the poor little widow, with

a great calm on her face, went down to the King's ship, singing, "Surely mercy and goodness have followed me all the days of my life," happy that her content had brought the crown at last.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the silence that followed, Faith raised up and looked at Mrs. Truman with wide eyes. She had listened to the clear voice, its thread of victory proclaiming the strong, vibrant nature, though it had been interwoven with sorrow. Then she added gently: "Don't you see, my dear, that you can't say to the great King, 'Ye have taken my brother that I loved, and I have no strength for the duties left me?' How many hearts attest in agony that He wants our richest treasures for His mansions!

"Blessed indeed are those, united in love, who are privileged to grow old together. When the young wife sees the dearest life drifting away from her, she cries, with the Princess, 'He cannot go and leave me!' Yet the Lord rejects the 'tinsel' and the cheap cloth that we would send to Him in the persons of the useless on earth, while we would keep our treasures for ourselves."

There was a long pause; then Faith said, "There is so much in it, Mrs. Truman, I can see just how you would remember this."

"Yes, dear; I read it years ago. It was a wonderful conception."

## CHAPTER XXII.

"The Flower of his Beloved Land  
His life for Glory gave."

—O'hara.

Faith reached home disheartened, without any news of their boys. She told her father of her capture and her failure, touching the danger lightly.

"And you saw nothing more of Monk?"

"No. We thought it best to avoid Springfield; but the soldiers must have carried him there."

"If they caught him, I don't believe they did."

"Mrs. Turner is mysterious and excited," Faith continued. "She sent Lem Patton home with me, spite of the boy's great danger; said she had business to attend to, and couldn't come."

\* \* \* \* \*

A few days later the MacGregor sat by the window and looked out on the trees bending beneath a heavy sleet, and exclaimed, drearily, "Not a word yet from Bruce, and Archie missing."

Faith saw something moving afar off, through the falling afternoon; at a turn in the road it was thrown in silhouette against the grey space beyond. The MacGregor started up, "It's the colt that Monk rode."

Then they recognized the stolid profile of the driver. He sat rigid, with a tense grip on the lines, while the

young horse fretted against the bit and came on with short, rebellious steps. Then a trim little sorrel came in sight, and they saw Mrs. Turner riding stiffly. They stopped at the gate, with no sign or motion to the group on the porch, waiting cold and breathless as with the chill of death.

The MacGregor went down the steps heavily; Faith darted past him with a cry of terror and longing and hope. They had seen that Monk had some one in the cart. With tender pity Monk raised the blanket; they saw the pallid, lifeless thing beneath. There was nothing like Archie, save the golden curls that lay crisp and tangled against the rough coat beneath his head.

\* \* \* \* \*

The days dragged on heavily at Branksome in the fall of '62. They lived in a hope that yet was scarcely a hope in its strain, for the results of the splendid fighting Price's men were engaged in around Corinth. It was all in vain. Their friends at home never knew till long afterward the awful despair that was creeping over them, as they felt the superior force of the enemy coming against them, now in the heart of the South, with men and money unlimited.

The next spring Faith had a letter smuggled through from Bruce, while they waited at Grand Gulf, stating that he and Frank were together, in the first Missouri in Gen. Bowen's division. They were all hopeful, he said, and he praised the lovely country,

and the good people around them. Not a word of the perils above, below and all about them. Grant was then massing his men three to their one, in front; the great gunboats coming up the Mississippi in dark wrath; though he felt it all, as he tried to write cheerfully to the stricken home. There was no word, either, of their sore disappointment over Gen. Price's leave for the west, while their own brigade was tied to its post out there.

Faith could see the effort to keep up their courage, the big, brave brother; and she thought of how tenderly he would have cared for Archie, so far from home. Now the bright head was low, the joyous life cut off with a cruelty that dimmed her own. It was at least peaceful on the green hill where he lay 'mid the sweet loneliness of Nature; the song of birds and the wild flowers were above him, and the lullabies of the grand, old forest trees.

With the ideal Confederacy established, triumphant, the price of glory would have been dear; now it was bitter.

\* \* \* \* \*

They began to watch for the morrow with its disasters; hopes were fading as the South saw her resources failing, while Union troops, fresh and well-fed, supplied the thinning ranks of the Federals.

The militia were growing more insolent with their power over Southern neighbors; it looked truly, as Monk said, that it was 'their day'; they persecuted

women and children, and made feeble attempts at bush-whacking, when all the odds were in their favor. They feared Quantrell (who spread terror through the country), and gave him a wide berth; while to Joe Shelby they gave the width of the state and hunted the other side for their dirty work.

The hardest fighting in Missouri in '63 and '64 was around Kansas City, where it was reported that ten thousand soldiers were stationed for the purpose of quelling the guerillas under Quantrell. Stories were told of his wrongs and his vengeance and his awful deeds in expiation. The militia, when out in small squads, prayed for the earth to open and swallow them, when his black flag rose before them.

In March, '64, a company of militia, supposing that Quantrell's men were still in the South, went down into Green county, and searched Branksome for letters. A little Frenchwoman had taken pity on the poor boys, starving for news from home, and sewed their letters in a petticoat, which she carried through safely. She found the MacGregor, as everybody did. Faith judged rightly that they were trying to trace this lady, and carried her letters to Aunt Dilse to burn.

But they had found one that answered their purpose; they were delivering their charges to her father when she came back. The leader was saying: "It is men like you that give us all the trouble in this state, and all such will simply have to get out of it."

The MacGregor stood grandly, and looked down at him with such a blaze in his eyes, the officer drew his revolver; thus fortified, he went on: "We loyal men know the nests that must be broken up, and——"

"Do you know Stringfellow?" Monk interrupted him, disdainfully.

"Why?" The officer turned, taking in Helen's handsome profile as she looked out of the window and Faith's distressed face as she watched her father.

"Oh! I just wanted to know. He's the only white man about here who would report on a gentleman. and no nigger would stoop so low as to carry news to you about the MacGregor." Then he added, candidly: "I've been wanting a chance to wring his neck for some time."

But Monk's brave diversion failed, and the Captain went on: "I'll give you three days to get out of the state. If I find you here at the end of that time, I will burn this shack, and put you—where all rebels ought to be." Monk turned to his master consolingly, "Meantime, if Shelby comes, he won't be here to see," jerking his thumb contemptuously at the doughty Captain. Monk's lips were stretched over an alarming space, and his smile was the smile of a demon as he showed them to the door.

It had never entered Monk's head that any man would dare to lay hands on the MacGregor. He was fairly beside himself with rage. When he returned the



girls were begging their father to go to a place of safety.

"We will be safer without you," Faith was saying, "the only wonder is that the house was not burned long ago. But that is not the question; think of old Mr. Green! a quiet man who would not even talk politics. Shot down in his door because he would not report on his neighbors. You will have to hide, father."

"Yes, sir!" Monk put in here. "That little rat will get you, sir! In all his life he never had the chance before to deal with a gentleman. You may trust me with the farm and the young ladies, though I would like to go with you, sir!"

"Don't worry about me, boy, I shall not go far and will be back soon."

Monk was plainly distressed. "I know you won't sleep a wink away from home and won't have any cotton to pick in the night, nor anybody to talk to when you get up."

"Father," Helen interrupted them, "Monk is wavering, if you don't assure him that you can be comfortable away from home, we will be left without any protector."

The third day brought the militiamen back.

"Where is the old man?" to the family lined up before him.

Helen's black eyes rested on him an instant, then turned away in haughty silence; Faith looked at

Dilse, who said with dignity, "My master has gone, sir."

"Your master! you old fool! don't you know you are free?"

Aunt Dilse straightened her tall form, "What do you think freedom would mean to me, away from these child'en I have raised. Faith's mother give her to me when she was dyin'. I'll answer to her, up yonder! Freedom! Umph!"

"Never mind, Aunt Dilse, you are splendid, but it is thrown away here!"

The captain called the men outside, when one tall young fellow said stoutly, "There's no dirty work to be done here, I hope, the very niggers shame us with their loyalty."

The officer sneered, "Did you hear her tell the old woman that her eloquence was thrown away here? I'll humble her! I'll set the house afire and make her beg for it. What is that, in the name of all the furies?"

They were out back of the house and near them was a small kitchen, from the porch Aunt Dilse watched and listened, she was rocking herself back and forth and suddenly a strange, high song rose shrilly through the darkness that was falling around them.

"What riseth slow from the ocean caves  
And the stormy surf?

The phantom pale sets his blackened foot  
On the fresh, green turf.

And the phantom white, whose clay-cold face  
Was once so fair,  
Dries with his shroud his clinging vest  
And his sea-tossed hair.

And the phantom said to the mocking seer,  
I come from the south;  
Put thy hand on *my* hand, thy heart on *my* heart,  
Thy mouth on my mouth."

The men stopped and listened as if under a spell, it grew on them as the song rose higher and shriller in the weird gloom.

"In God's name," one old man exclaimed, "Let's get out of this, she is a witch. I am shivering all over. It's a sign, a warning."

Monk's smile usually seemed restricted by conditions, when he heard the song and saw the effect, he chuckled in an abandoned glee that would have filled the family with alarm. "Dilse is flyin' at 'em now," he said, in solid enjoyment of her tragic song; "But I had rather have her at me 'tooth and nail' than have her sing such a song at me."

The tall young sergeant turned to go, "Be persuaded, captain, and let us go on our way, and let these women alone."

The sisters had concluded that they could do no better than to leave matters in the hands of their faithful servants, they slipped out to the porch of

Dilse's kitchen with a pathetic helplessness that stirred the old woman to heroic resolve.

The captain stood by the end of a low, one-story ell; in answer to the sergeant, he touched a match to some wood piled against it. Old Dilse sprang up with a wild screech, then she and Monk stood a moment in consultation. Old enmities were generously forgotten.

"Pooh!" Monk said to her, "If there ever was a time in your life when you felt that you could rise to a lofty height, you make that moment now! We can save it! They won't shoot a nigger. The boards are hard and thick, as the fire gets to the roof, I will throw the water on it. You hand it up to me. You can reach the porch with them long shanks that were made for somthin'. Put Joe at the windlass and don't you hesitate. Stand right up to them. If we save it, what a thing to tell to the MacGregor."

He climbed nimbly up the porch, took the first bucket with a flourish, then, as the flames crept up the walls, he smiled down above the dancing light, with a diabolism that nearly finished the old man who had been upset over Dilse's song. He poured the water down and called out with voice raised to a chanting cry, like the battle cry of a savage tribe roused to savage grandeur, as he thrashed the fire back into smoke and vapor as fast as it leaped above the faithful, old boards. Dilse's long arms handed

up the buckets with a dispatch that stirred Monk's soul to admiration.

"Bring on the water, Dilse!!  
They come like wolves in the night—  
They come at a serpent's call,  
A thief, and a son of a thief  
Whom the gods have forsaken!"

Monk was fairly alive with the spirit of tragedy. Like a huge Gnome he looked larger than life in the flickering light from below. he waved his arms aloft when waiting for Dilse to hand him the bucket, while his chant rang out louder and louder, as he went on,

"Bring on the water, Dilse!!  
My sires were Zulu Kings,  
Giants of a warrior race,  
And black with Afric's sun,  
Who sniffed the battle's rage afar!  
From such proud heights they fell!  
A hundred years brought change  
From spear and fife, to plow and hoe!  
Till sold, enslaved, the mock of men!  
Then life's doors ope'd wide for me,  
At the hands of a pale-face Prince,  
And now, I guard his home.  
Bring on the water!—Dilse!!"

It was weirdly impressive. Monk was beyond fear. He was dilated with the courage of his kingly sires, though, as Helen said, that tradition was born on the spot. Yet Monk, like a great tragedian, had the "happy art of speaking fiction as if it were truth."

Faith caught Helen's arm suddenly, "Where did the militia leave their horses?"

"Out on the west side, why?"

"Look carefully out to the east, what is that? Oh, Helen, they are soldiers, I see the gleam of guns against the light."

On the instant a dozen rifles rang out and as many of the men standing in the light of the fire were prostrate. The confusion was indescribable. A score of militiamen sprang to their horses and went tearing down the road at a wild gallop, another volley went after the others and the cry of "halt" stopped the last in the mad race. Monk stopped his war song and stood in unqualified delight. This was more than he had dreamed of, he forgot the fire till recalled sharply, "Go on, my boy, and put out the fire." Its dimmer light flickered over the pallid faces of a dozen militiamen in line before the black plumes of Quantrell's guerrillas. The leader questioned them sternly; (the story as told by Monk lost nothing in the telling). The officer called for the ladies and listened gravely to their recital of the night's work.

He turned to his men, "Todd, get some straws. It must be the lot of one of these men to carry the fate of the others to headquarters."

Faith went to him quickly, "Oh! you will not kill them in cold blood. See how many have fallen. It seems too horrible. They are only militia, many of them, no doubt, forced to serve against their wills. Spare them, on their promise to lay down their arms."

"Young lady!" He was coldly polite. "We cannot

discuss this question with you. Spared to-day, to-morrow would see them persecuting some poor woman because her husband is in the Southern army. We have followed their trail since we crossed the state line, and we know of this war on women."

In the short pause that followed, the tall sergeant of the militia stepped up to Faith, "Miss MacGregor, I have made no war on women. I have tried to do a soldier's duty, as the right of it looked to me. If I value my life higher, for the few minutes that I may have it, it will be because you have pleaded for it. I thank you."

Faith turned from him with a lump in her throat and went to the guerrillas again, as she looked from one to another, their bronzed faces shaded in the uncertain light from the porch, she felt that they bore the impress of the years of cruel work back of them.

There was no telling whether the sergeant was the only observer of her flushed cheeks or whether the lots fell as they were cast, but certain it is, that Todd's strong hands gave to the sergeant the life he had learned to prize. He bore it, darkened with the grim tragedy, back to the broken homes of his comrades and it widened the breach—as such deeds were doing throughout the state—into a national feud, between men who had lived as friends and neighbors; a hill, river or narrow creek divided enemies on either side, the feuds growing as the bitter war went on.

Looking at Quantrell, Faith could well believe that

no boyish tenderness survived the night when he lay on the plains in Kansas, and watched beside his brother's corpse, to keep away the wolves. This was the story, that they were attacked in '56 in an emigrant's wagon, robbed and left for dead. The younger revived, and laid his plans so well, that thirty out of the thirty-two engaged in that night's work were slain through his vengeance; afterwards he assumed the office of wholesale avenger of wrong, in the bloody work of the western border. His stern justice may have appeased his hate, but a beautiful country was laid waste in the wild warfare; where he protected one, he doomed others to death, and sacrificed more Southern people than his reckless daring destroyed of the Federals. The latter burned and killed in retaliation, and Quantrell followed in their wake without fear or remorse.

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In their complicated troubles, the family were glad the MacGregor was away from home that night; he had raised his voice against guerrilla warfare from the first; he lost his temper when he talked to them, or about them. He had been heard to say they should be compelled to wear the wolf's head, like the Mosstroopers of old, on the Scottish border, to show that they were enemies to both sides. As for the attack and rescue of his place that night he said he would a



little rather "haud in wi' the hounds, than run wi' the hare."

He praised Monk and Dilse till they were almost in danger of growing into friendly relations, while working together in the common defense.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

"And when our triumph was delayed,  
And many a heart grew sore afraid,  
We still hoped on."

—*Father Ryan.*

The MacGregors had no news from the South for a long year. They read of the fearful fighting at Port Gibson and Baker's Creek, where the "boys" fought like Trojans, the overwhelming numbers that finally bore them down; at Vicksburg, where they were still heroic, with Grant's great army closing around them. There were no more victories for the waiting hearts in Missouri. They watched in suspense for the list of prisoners exchanged after Vicksburg had fallen—a name to mean life or death.

Grave forebodings shadowed the South over the result of this siege, and the summer of '63 seemed concerted on Vicksburg. The Confederates behind the breastworks in the beleagured city, starving, suffering, but still inflexible; Grant's splendid army planted on the hills around it, his gunboats waiting, black and strong, the day of attack. Time after time they were hurled back, till the siege had lasted six weeks; the defenses growing weaker day by day.

In a last and desperate conflict the day before the surrender a gallant soldier in a Missouri Division was

struck by a sharpshooter; as he fell a friend caught him in his arms and bore him to a place of safety: the friend was a great Ajax, bronzed and red-bearded, who carried his huge frame safely through the war, to the wonder of all, as the minie-balls picked off the others around him.

"Now, Frank," he said gently, "don't try to move: you are safe here. I will get the surgeon. Frank! Old boy!"

But Frank lay white and still, all unheeding the fierce storm that raged a few yards away; growing wilder for the desperate fear of capture.

In hospital, the doctor shook his head over the wound.

Bruce watched him with troubled eyes. "Save him, doctor! I think you can! He is so strong and young. Pray for the noble life hanging in the balance!" After a while, he said: "It came to me just before that charge that felled him, that some one had said that God never sent a man anywhere only for his good. As I stood behind that reeking ditch, the bones of the poor fellows who had been buried there helping to protect us, the hot sun pouring down, our men fighting to the death and hopelessly; I could see no good in that place just then!"

Afterward, through days of delirium, Frank wanted always to cross the river.

"It is keeping me from home," he said, "the great swift river! And I want Dr. Hays! His hands are

so cool! It is always cool up there! And the birds sing in the trees, and the leaves rustle all day; and there are no cannon, and no braying band and no blood."

His gray eyes, large and bright with fever, turned imploringly to the Doctor.

"Poor fellow," the latter said, "he is not the only one who would like to leave the Mississippi between him and this cruel work. I will send him to the country." He glanced at Bruce as he went on, "It is just such manhood and courage that breaks before wounds and sickness; his whole splendid self, mental and physical, shattered with a thing like that," as he took the bullet from his pocket. "I have some friends who will care for him, where he will find the birds and the green leaves, and nature must have a chance to try for the rest."

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The nature of youth worked the miracle of recovery; Frank's new nurse thought he had his home and his Faith mixed unaccountably.

When scarcely removed from the "unshapen land" of his feverish dreams he was eager to join the race again; desolate, now that he was separated from Bruce, and conscious that the Confederates were beginning to realize the crush of defeat.

Bruce had gone with the prisoners for exchange on the surrender of Vicksburg. After the death of the two brave Generals, Bowen and Green, the Division

was reorganized and their old Regiment was now in Gen. Cockerell's Brigade, with Joe Johnstone in Georgia, in the midst of the hot fight they were making against Sherman's invasion.

\* \* \* \* \*

Frank Truman's new friends told him, when he bade them good-bye, that his impatience was harder to cure than the wound and sickness that had laid him low. He was one of many thousands who owed his life to the noble women of the South, who conquered often, in a fight with death that saved a good soldier far away from home and friends.

After weeks spent in trying to reach the army of the West, he was captured in Arkansas, and taken to Little Rock, where he had the good fortune to fall into General Steel's hands, then Federal Commander in Arkansas. He was a just man and brave, who treated the Confederates as prisoners of war, exchanging them for his own men, instead of sending them to Northern prisons. Frank received this courteous treatment just when Joe Shelby was making some dashing raids in the neighborhood; from them Frank heard of the proposed expedition to Missouri, under Gen. Price, in the fall of '64.

Shelby's gallant Cavalry inspired confidence, and many homeless Arkansans joined the perilous adventure. Their homes were gone, their country desolated, and it was black behind them, with news of heavy reinforcements against Lee and Johnstone.

They were told many men waited in Missouri to join Price; with the very spirit of war, they were willing to give them the chance.

Frank Truman, jubilant once more, and willing to dare anything to get to Missouri, joined Shelby's Cavalry for the expedition.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was said that Gen. Price sent word to Geo. Todd, commanding Quantrell's guerrillas while the latter was wounded, to concentrate their forces along the Missouri river and harass militia and regulars, in order to divert attention from their coming. Old soldiers who are loyal to Price, who know of his undoubted love for Missouri, deny that any such order was sent. They claim that he was as considerate of suffering as a brave commander could be, and must have known the terror of fire and sword that must follow this order to Todd.

It belongs to the history of this wild time, how these guerrillas gathered mysteriously, exaggerated reports of their numbers, sent out to mislead, that threw the state into a panic. In Jackson, Ray, Lafayette. Chariton, Howard, Boone and Randolph, they went from one to another with such fierce slaughter, the whole country was in a furor of excitement. Any attack on the militia was simply a rout; with regulars, they thought it fun to fight as one to six.

Many of these guerrillas were strong Southern men at heart, while many started differently, would have

fought on the other side, in the daring spirit of war. People who remember know that it did not help the Southern cause, that it increased the prejudice of many who had sympathized with the South, and gave countenance to the belief in the North that the middle states had turned to cut-throats and robbers.

True reports of these engagements read like the wild fancies of frenzied fiction.

"Out from Rocheport the guerrillas met a long wagon train going to a Federal camp. There was a slaughter and a fire; dead, wounded, mules, clothing and ammunition in one horrible cremation."

It was told that Todd said grimly of the work, "that if he were sent on to let people know that he was on the war-path, people would find it out."

"Bill Anderson," one of the most noted of the guerrillas, threw himself into battle with frenzy, and counted his life as nothing, beside the vengeance that stirred him against a Federal soldier. (For the death of his sister at the hands of U. S. soldiers, early in the war.)

Centralia was one scene of his fierce retribution. He stopped a train of Federal soldiers, when the tragedy was precipitated by a soldier who fired at them from the car window; his comrades, eighty-five in all, were lined, while the guerrillas waited for orders to fire. In five minutes they lay lifeless along the railroad track.

These were instances of the wild raid through central Missouri; the black flag, borne with the jaunty daring of gilded oriflame, that left behind it the

crushed hopes of our people, who could see where the results of such warfare must fall. But the people of the state thought less of their persecutions than of the brave Confederates who had dared so much to save it. It was all for naught. The Southern force was too small for the work they found. Old soldiers said that Price was not young enough, or fast enough to control such an expedition like he had handled Missouri infantry, but his bravery was great, that he had come at all. He was overwhelmed by the numbers against him, and retreated southward, Gen. Blunt pursuing with an able army of thrice our number. The same heavy odds had prevented a stand at Lexington and Independence.

\* \* \* \* \*

Once, at the fierce battle of Westport, Frank Truman saw in a company of Marmaduke's Cavalry dashing by, a soldier who resembled St. John Winstead. The elegant, easy seat in the saddle brought a score of old memories before him. It was no time to muse on anything save the storm of battle; could it be St. John? And why had he kept out of his way? Without considering that St. John might be ignorant of his whereabouts also.

At the nearest point to Springfield, on the march southward, Frank got permission, through the scout, for a short leave; he decided that he could make it to Branksome and back while the heavy wagon-train moved through the rough country below them.



It was late when he reached the house, to find it apparently deserted. He imagined he saw some one move in the shrubbery by the front gate; keeping a sharp lookout for Feds, he avoided the front entrance and went in at the side; the long ell, dismantled and vacant, gave him grim welcome. It stood as Monk had left it that night (Frank had not heard of the fire). Cobwebs hung from the brown rafters of the kitchen that twisted about in the last gleams of the sun that shone through the burned wall.

His heart throbbed fiercely. To think of what he had lived through in the past month for the hope of seeing her! The demons of war seemed nearer and harder than they ever had in the scorching fires of battle.

He wandered about the grounds in a maze of trouble over the misfortunes of the family. His long, unspoken love surged over him as he looked around the familiar place. Suddenly it seemed to rush back in a chilling tide, to his heart. He stood rigidly, his fierce eyes bent on a slender figure in black, her head bowed on her hands, crossed above the gate. A soldier stood by her, one hand resting on her bowed head. The light was nearly gone; a dim ray fell between the trees and revealed the well known profile of St. John, looking down on the bowed head.

Frank strode through the grounds without looking for any one else, in a despairing rage, to the place where he had left his horse. He had come through

fire and sword to see her for an hour, to tell his love boldly, and vowed if he could win her, to defy war and death to get back; he had laughed at his faint-hearted self of years before, and pictured her fine face eloquent in the twilight. Oh yes! He had planned it all! He was appalled at the havoc one short hour had made of his life.

The faithful horse, that had bounded to his spur as long as he had the strength, stumbled as "first call" sounded weirdly through the chill of the morning.

\* \* \* \* \*

The bustle of the new camp portended battle. Blunt was pushing them and Frank was in time for the bloody fight at Newtonia, where brave and desperate men felt as if their country was slipping away from them, with this last fight for the state.

Frank saw his comrades falling around him, saw his captain mortally wounded, and the men wavering under a terrible fire.

Shelby was there, he was everywhere, his eyes gleaming like steel as he rushed them to hopeless charge. His voice rang out when the officer fell, "Tell that eagle-eyed Truman to rush them on!"

When it was over the cause in Missouri was lost.\* Gen. Price carried his crushed hopes southward, a march of suffering and death to many poor fellows the bullet had spared.

\* \* \* \* \*

A Missouri Confederate (Maj. J. N. Edwards) used

this simile of the final struggle: "It took months of toil to build the good ship Hesperus, though her timbers were seasoned and ready to hand; it took hours of trouble to launch her when thoroughly equipped for the sea; but it took only a few minutes of wave and wind play to shiver her into splinters, when her keel crushed down on the roof of 'Norman's Wee'."

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The writer had an uncle with Shelby, and learned from him many incidents of this daring expedition to Missouri, of brave men who risked their lives for state and home, in the days of the falling Confederacy.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

"It is hard to stand on the slanting deck  
Of a ship that has suffered a total wreck."

—*Josephine Pollard.*

The broad acres of Branksome were lying idle in the spring of '65. There were no jolly farm hands at the plow, no horses roaming the pastures, no cattle on the crisp, fresh grass. The negroes were gone, except Dilse and Monk, who were faithful through all.

Monk's gun, hidden mysteriously in one of his caves (Monk had a monopoly on caves—it seemed that his strange, absorbed nature found companionship in the re-murmurs of their cavernous walls), brought them meat, and that of the daintiest. There was no coffee, no tea, no sugar, no milk or butter.

The MacGregor was banished, this time beyond their knowledge. The two daughters had deserted the burned ell, long ago, and sought refuge in rooms in front, on the second floor; taking their meals in Dilse's cabin.

The news of "Lee's Surrender" fell with the weight of a giant hand, that crushed all hope for the South.

The news, a few days later, of the assassination of President Lincoln deepened despair; as a just and

generous people looked upon it as a wrong, and one calculated to work a national disaster.

\* \* \* \* \*

What this surrender meant to many brave hearts afar off, only they could know. They had judged this question by their own consciences; they had fought in defense, when their homes and their principles were warred upon; their rights invaded. Their theories of State's Rights had fallen before a stronger power, as they were falling now.

They had made a gallant fight; they saw now how much easier it was to fight than to surrender. They had greeted the "Forward, Charge!" with cheers and laughter; now their hearts bent, like the body of man under mortal blow, and tears rolled over bronzed and bearded faces as they faced that last command, "Stack Arms!"

One of Lee's soldiers told in pathetic words the effect of this final call at "Appomattox":

"Stack arms!!" In faltering accents slow  
And sad, it creeps from tongue to tongue;  
A broken, murmuring wail of woe  
From manly hearts by anguish wrung.  
Like victims of a mid-night dream,  
We move, we know not how or why;  
For life and hope but phantoms seem,  
And it would be relief to die!"

These war-broken soldiers, as they watched the piling muskets, must have felt for Lee, whose beautiful life had been a sacrifice for the country he loved.

He stood in the hour of defeat, with a kingly presence that stirred the sympathy of generous soldiers who wore the blue as well as those who wore the gray. "There was much to remember," an old soldier remarked, "by the men who saw the two great generals. Lee and Grant, on that day that old soldiers can never forget."

\* \* \* \* \*

Faith MacGregor thought of the surrender and how it must end, as well as she could, with Aunt Dilse's song, high and quivering, floating around as she went about her work

"Marthy's part was the good old part,"

finding the solace of the working-woman in her crude theory that "Mary chose the easier lot, while Martha was the real martyr."

Then she saw Monk coming in with young squirrels for dinner. He stopped in front of the porch with a military salute, his cap off and the long, foxy tails of his game held high in triumph.

"It is a great help," Faith said cheerfully, "to have one among us undaunted in the face of woe."

"It is not all woe, Miss; they say the war is over: the MacGregor will come home, think of it! And Massa Bruce! I wonder how big he is by this time? There are no two such men in the state of Missouri!"

(And Monk went in for the daily conflict with Dilse as to who should "skin the squirrels.")

Faith looked out on the beauty of the April morning. The lilacs had dared the gloom and kept their hearts sweet all day, and waved their splendid plumes, rosy-gray like the clouds at sunset, scattering fragrance defiantly. The apple blossoms were gorgeous in pink and white, and all nature tried to make her forget.

\* \* \* \* \*

The MacGregor is back home, and to Monk the world is his own again.

Col. Winstead's jolly face was received with shouts of welcome that sobered to pity when they found he had brought Mr. King, the wreck of the intrepid scout. He was shot from ambush while scouting ahead of Price on his way to Missouri the fall before.

Mrs. Turner was at Branksome, all in a quiver with the many responsibilities devolving upon her. She assisted Miss King in overhauling the overseer's cottage, where Margaret insisted on taking her father.

Then Mrs. Turner would help with the preparation for the reunion when Bruce should get home. She rode to Springfield and came back in much elation with two pounds of coffee which she had bought for a dollar; "when dollars were as scarce as hen's teeth," as she put it.

Then St. John came, unchanged, and so buoyant as to draw down Aunt Dilse's maledictions from the start. The stir reminded her continually of Archie,

and Aunt Dilse believed in making a parade of her affections.

Two more weeks and Bruce reached home; a great, splendid fellow, his red hair darkened, with long, tawny whiskers. Monk saw the father and son when they met; he had planned a grand reception; and there he was, awed to silence, crouching against the porch, his hands over his face.

They stood by the gate, father and son of even height, two pairs of eyes looking into each other's, an arm of each over the shoulder of the other. A reaction was necessary with Monk at such a time; he darted into the house for his violin and made it fairly quiver during the family meeting. It was a soldier's reveille, the mad rush of battle that melted into the moans of the dying; a wail of woe drawn softly, and every heart lived over its bitter ache as they missed Archie from the home-coming.

Faith remembered afterwards how Margaret King sprang up in her path, her gray eyes shining, her face transfigured with a beauty that startled her.

The next day, while the dinner was in progress (Monk said they had not had a dinner for three years) Bruce said it was useless to wait for Frank; he had been searching for him for two weeks, then he had heard that he had gone with Shelby to Texas. Afterwards he said to Margaret, "Faith is pale, what is the matter?"

"Come out in the garden and help me gather flow-



ers for dinner, while I tell you; now," as they walked along, "it was what you said about Frank, don't you see?"

"No, I don't see! Her face blanched all at once—"

Margaret said in despair, "It seems a sorry joke to see you so obtuse on this one subject," then softly, "she loves him."

"Oh, Margaret! I never dreamed of it! I don't believe Frank did."

"No doubt; he is a stupid, too."

"But St. John," Bruce went on in puzzled tone, "he is always hanging around; any one can see—" He stopped, perplexed.

"He is always hanging around—if one might speak so of such an elegant presence—but you are dense if you think it is Faith."

"Whom then?" Alarm in his voice.

"Your sister Helen."

Bruce dropped the flowers she was heaping on his hands and looked his astonishment.

"Helen!" Then with a sigh, "Poor Gray."

"Yes, Mr. Gray was so nice, but Helen has been a widow four years and her nature rebels against suffering; she is longing for a gayer world and St. John will give it back to her. I am sure almost, that she saw him last fall; Papa said St. John came to Missouri with Price. Helen had been sad and pale; all at once, afterward, she bloomed like a rose. Mrs. Therner and I came over to see them; we met a soldier in the

dusk, a tall man with heavy, dark beard, and cavalry boots, striding fiercely through the woods beyond Branksome. At the house we saw Helen coming in, her face rosy and bright; Faith was down at Dilse's cabin, and she had been crying. But Faith does not go to people with her troubles, and I did not know what to think of it all."

"It is bewildering," Bruce said, with a frown.

"Don't you think Helen's beauty is dazzling at times? She is a smaller edition of yourself," she went on naively. "How perfectly splendid that the Yankee bullets could miss you all these years; they saved you for—me."

She gave him more flowers (he dropped the others and crushed the last as he put his arm around her), "and no one suspected," she went on, looking up at him with radiant eyes. "How funny that I should come away out here in the country, take up with an alien cause and pin my heart on the sleeve of a —"

"A countryman?" Bruce interrupted.

"No. A soldier going off to fight my people while I dodge about in the woods and wait for him through four years of poverty and danger."

"Love is always wonderful—and charming," his dark eyes full of light; "it is another world to me since yesterday, since I knew. The very fact that I lived through these years brightens the world I am coming home to."

"You are crushing the flowers; we must take them

in; and Bruce, don't tell them yet, while my father is so bad."

"But I could help you, dear."

"No, I must care for him alone. He has been so desolate all these years and needs me at the last."

\* \* \* \* \*

St. John Winstead was captured in the last raid, while out foraging for Marmaduke's Cavalry, and could tell them nothing of Frank, only that he had heard he was left somewhere in Arkansas, very sick.

## CHAPTER XXV.

"No more a soldier, bruised pieces go."

—*Shakespeare.*

At Marshall, Texas, Shelby's bronzed cavalrymen were drawn up in line to discuss surrender. "We do not know the word," Shelby said, grimly, and dismissed the matter with a wave of his hand. The mad spirit of adventure moved the brigade, and they had made the resolve not "to look back on the dying throes of the cause they had loved." One old veteran was heard to say "they had left the others to follow the funeral."

Even while they planned, the whole division had been surrendered by Gen. Kirby Smith, at Shreveport.

There was no revolution for Shelby to lead. The great fighter wanted the whole southwest to give him room to breathe, and called for volunteers to Mexico.

It seemed reasonable to these soldiers that the United States would, on the close of hostilities at home, send troops to the aid of Juarez, head of the Republican faction in Mexico, to help him subdue the Imperialists, trying then, to plant their monarchy there. Some kind of prescience—may be a knowl-

edge of Shelby's character—inclined them to believe that general would go to Mexico, espouse the cause of Maximilian, and thus continue the bitter fight that was in him.

They turned their backs resolutely on the fair South they had tried so hard to save, and started with perhaps a thousand men, many of whom stopped in Mexico or Texas for home or refuge.

Shelby's tattered flag that had never been captured, was buried in the Rio Grande. Colonel Slayback, of St. Louis, one of the number who held it above the water's flow, described the scene in verse.

"They buried then that flag and plume in the river's rushing tide,

Ere that gallant few  
Of the tried and true,

Had been scattered far and wide.

And that group of Missouri's valiant throng,

Who had fought for the weak against the strong,

Who had charged and bled

Where Shelby led,

Were the last who held above the wave

The glorious flag of the vanquished brave."

\* \* \* \* \*

Frank Truman held himself with both hands. It was an appeal of his whole, restless youth. Must he plunge into anything as wild as this expedition under

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\*Note.—The writer had the pleasure of meeting Shelby and Col. Slayback shortly after their return from Mexico, and heard from them, many reminiscences of this daring expedition, and the days of the falling Confederacy. Col. Slayback's poem was published in full by Major J. N. Edwards, another of the uncompromising band.

Shelby promised to be? He felt that all, even memory, would be left behind him then. One little hope held him back, as mad, perhaps, as the other venture.

As he stood, in a tumult of indecision, watching the men who rode out recklessly, or turned gravely back, a strange soldier touched him on the arm. A solemn young fellow who had joined them since the breaking up of the commands. "You are young Truman, I am told. I am from Christian county. I was watching you decide this."

"There is no choice," Frank replied gloomily.

"Your duty is your choice," the other answered gently. "These men go, in rage or despair, in search of adventure; we must go back to tamer lives and the ashes of ruined homes. Did you know they burned your house and carried off everything last fall?"

"Not a word. I have not heard from home since then."

"The country is a waste below Springfield. Your mother has nothing left but her land and—her son; while my wife has the first claim on me."

"Let these brave soldiers go!" Frank said to him. "We will, as you say, carry our regrets to fields that may be harder to face."

They turned together, and Frank told his comrade of a few whirling months good-bye; it required some courage, in the face of their contempt for those

who were willing to abide with the conquerors. Frank waited to see them start. The "triple-barred flag" was furled for this last march, and Shelby, with his dauntless heart and splendid eyes—so happy in peace and so hard in war—was gone from his life forever.

Frank found a remnant of his old regiment, who decided the fight was over when Johnstone surrendered. The last of the great "Army of the West" laid down their arms, as men bid goodbye to their dying children going beyond their love and care.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the end of government transportation in Arkansas they started for the long march to Missouri. Back to the sad land they had left in hope, back through still forests, the green of the sod broken now and then with dirt piled roughly on the graves of soldiers who had fallen by the roadside the fall before.

"This was their rest after the sufferings of that fearful march. One who feels the horror of that kind of rest that I have should be grateful, even for this," Frank Truman observed, as they trudged along.

His serious friend did not deign to reply to the unorthodox challenge.

Once they crossed a forest that seemed a wilderness. Fresh as God made it, yet crowned with the growth of centuries. There were no houses, no fences, no roads; the winding paths might have sug-

gested Indians; there were no other signs of human failures for miles and miles. Black cedars clung to the mountain sides, and giant pines threw long shadows across the valleys, from one hill to another. Tiny flowers, wild things in blue, pink and white, pushed their heads boldly in the unbroken stillness that was so deep; one listened for the pulsing of the earth as you listen at sea for the pounding of the waves.

They stood on a high crest and looked over the vast solitude. Frank mused on the "new life" in the June fullness of tree and flower; and pondered aloud. "We are going soon where we will find scattered homes, repressed and 'brooding people' among the hills, blooming now, in green and color (the people, I mean), and they will creep into their huts with the winter leaves. The trees do more, they rest, but gather strength for the summer, for the storms as well as the sunshine." He looked at his fellow-traveler, who listened in wondering silence, and chewed gravely, as Truman went on.

- "Did you ever observe that Nature only fails through humanity? It is the taint of sin that deepens through generations, into the spot of leprosy that means—death. Can you imagine the magnificent nature about us, degenerated into the air that hangs over the loathsome homes of the lepers?"

He turned rather fiercely on his ruminating com-



rade to find him unruffled over gloomy philosophies. Frank smiled sadly.

"He only knows that he is going to his wife; perhaps to his home. He was never struck, all of a heap, just when hope was holding him on high."

After a while, the other said evenly, "You are the worst cut-up over the war of any man I have seen. That is excuse enough for all, though. Let's go. pardner!"

\* \* \* \* \*

They struck White River at a difficult place to cross. Frank looked across to the steep, bristling banks and remembered a time when he had climbed down them rapidly, in the winter of '61. Archie's shoulder was weak, the Feds on their track, and he had promised her to take him to the army. They plunged in, Archie holding to him; he shivered now at the recollection of the deathly chill of the water, and how he had pushed against the swift current, saying over and over, "It is for her sake!"

It recalled how the story of Antinous came to him in the glow of success when they had neared the southern bank; how the Emperor Hadrian, studying astrology, found omens of disaster; Antinous imagined the calamity to his friend might be averted if he would give his own life to an angry God. Inspired with the thought of standing between his beloved Emperor and harm, he resolved on being

the victim. A moment after "the waters of the Nile flowed over the beautiful body."

It had been an inspiration to him to dare—what he would not attempt again; today it seemed an unreal sacrifice for the heir to a brilliant throne. Enthusiasm was dulled after the drenchings of the last four years.

"Are you chilling, Frank? You are shaking as with an ague."

"It is nothing. Those cliffs oppress me. We are going home, with no homes to go to."

"We will find a ford and see!" the other answered cheerfully. But he watched his friend with the fear of having a sick man for the remainder of their journey.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Turner heard of Frank Truman's uncertain fate—once she heard a report of his death, and went at once to Finley Creek, on one of her quiet missions, to see his mother. She found her in Cornie's cabin, with one comfort left, a high, white bed which Cornie had snatched from the burning house. She "made it up" with ostentatious care in the brightest corner, while she made herself a cot by the hearth. The table was set under a great elm by the door, its shade serving for a sitting-room as well.

Mrs. Truman was sad and depressed as the soldiers returned from the war. Mrs. Turner said to her cheerfully, "We can only hope for the best; that's

what I always told 'Stern, when he wanted to cross the bridge a dozen times; and we will find so much to do; course I'll stay a day or two an' help you fix for Frank. First thing, we'll take that lone chicken-cop away f'om the parlor door; an' fix the lawn in front, while Cornie cooks that pone on the hearth that she's been fixing for an hour. We'll train these Virgin-bower vines, an' partition off Frank a settin' room, with the blue sky for a roof. Did you ever notice how much wider life looks out of doors?

"That reminds me of the MacGregor's: they are like the air you breathe on a forest hill. Or were, before the trouble over Archie's death. The MacGregor had aged twenty years since then."

She caught herself, and rambled away from saddening topics. "But Helen is cityfied and fashionable. When everything was ruinous high, Helen took two old green dresses (she is a picture in green) had Dilse to dye 'em, made 'em over into one, and come out tall an' stately as a queen; ever body else was in homespun. When Helen come home f'om boardin' school, the MacGregor said, (so Dilse told me) 'they shall never have my Faith to educate the heart out of her.' "Yes," she added, reflectively, "education makes some, and unmakes some; I've often told Stern I had a curiosity to see what it would 'a' done for me."

Then, continuing her reminiscent mood.

"I had a houseful of sisters when I grewed up, an' I'll never cease to bless them for their kindness

in taking the housework off my hands because I hated it. We was pore, too, but I knowed ever body. an' I reamed about, an' rode about, an' I gethered a good deal that's helped me with people.

"Sternner an' me had a kind of good-comradeship between us, an' whatever I done was all right. Cou'se we had ups an' downs gittin' started (we'd only half a dollar left after we bought our furniture: so the other goes without sayin'. The old folks, his'n and mine, fitted us out with a cow an' a bed, an' skillets.) 'Sternner stood to me for ever-thing; an' sence he died, no four walls ever held me long at a time. In my restlessness I found other people in trouble; I help them an' thus fergit my own."

Mrs. Truman was interested in these reminiscences and made a study of the lily-of-the-field theory that sounded wholesome and encouraging; as they, "who had nothing to go on," need not be utterly cast down over the future. Before she knew it, she found herself out in the yard, sweeping the space beyond Cornie's cabin, quite cheerfully.

Mrs. Turner went away one morning and returned to find mother and son at supper under the elm, looking thankfully happy that they had each other left from the wreck.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few days later Mrs. Turner found Frank alone. and began the talk she had "laid out" for him. She looked at him sharply.

"You do come nearer bein' the livin' embodiment of war than any soldier I've come across yet."

"Yes, I'm peaceable enough," he replied, with a grim smile.

"Humph! I said so, thereckly I saw you. What are you goin' to do, anyway?"

"I'm going to build our fences first, for next year's crop."

"I think they's some fences in Green county you better be lookin' after."

"My fences are down in that direction, Mrs. Turner."

"Fur's I'm concerned they might stay down; when a man ain't got gumption enough to go see to 'em. It's a plain case to anybody with a grain of common sense, an' you are not chicken-hearted about—other things. But I can tell you this: They ain't nothin' in the shape of trouble as can tech Faith MacGregor if I can keep it from her. She's the noblest heart that ever breathed. I know her, an' I've been watchin'. That St. John is there, a loungin' around with his sleepy eyelids, a talkin' to Faith cause she's sharp enough to talk back to him; but he's shyin' back to Helen in no time (as if 'twas somethin' they ought to be ashamed of, an' so they ought; that's the trouble in courtin' a widow); an' the family is gettin' their stoopid eyes open at last."

Frank turned and looked at her squarely, as she went on.

"T'other day they was talkin' about you, Bruce and Margaret doin' the most of it; Bruce said he felt certain that you had gone off to Mexico, as he didn't believe they could kill you."

" 'If the devil knows where, he's well off,' the MacGregor said tartly.

"I got a glints of Faith's face just then, an' she was white as death.

"That night she said to me, kinder unconcerned. 'Mrs. Turner, when are you goin' to Finley Creek?'

" 'Why?' sez I.

"She was quiet a long time, an' then said: 'If I could, I would like to go and see Mrs. Truman. She has had misfortunes, too, you know.'

" 'I will find out first where she is,' I told her, 'as I'm goin' down there right away; an' then we'll go any time.' You can't tell by Faith's looks what she's thinkin'. Now Helen was pale an' thin a long time: but last fall the roses bloomed in her cheeks, an' her big eyes shined like stars, all at once. Margaret King an' me went over there an' I got a glints of her an' a soldier standin' by the fence a talkin' in dead earnest; we had just seen another one stalkin' out of the brush in the gloam, an' we couldn't see either one very good, but when we got to the house. Faith come out of Dilse's cabin, an' she'd been a-cryin'."

Frank seized her arm suddenly. "Are you sure of this, Mrs. Turner?" His voice was so sharp she started away from him.

"Sure of what?"

"That Faith was in Dilse's cabin when you got there?"

"I'm shore as can be. Why?" she asked solemnly.

"I've been a fool, that's all." She thought he admitted it cheerfully.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Turner had her spirits dampened when she met Faith on her return.

"You see, my dear, when I go after a man I fetch him." She said it playfully, to conceal her misgivings.

"I did not know that you 'went after a man,' and you might have let him fetch himself. His 'high mightiness' looks capable," that young lady replied.

"Well, I knowed in reason,—” Mrs. Turner began, in injured tone, but Faith was gone.

\* \* \* \* \*

And now in the days of peace, as in war, the old soldiers found the MacGregors. During Frank's first visit they were delighted with one from Dr. Hays, who had been held a prisoner in the South all this time by a pair of brown eyes. They were out by the gate one day, when they saw a man walking haltingly toward Branksome. They watched him with curious interest, till Dr. Hays exclaimed, "It is 'old Sime,' plodding through the heat as natural as life."

They pretended to talk earnestly, in the shade, as

he came up to them, of war-time scenes, when a rich, deep voice broke in suddenly—

"And so ye missed the sturm and drang av it, aal av ye?" his red face one broad smile. There was a merry hand-shaking then; the boys enjoyed his happiness over a bath, a good supper, a clean suit of Bruces' old clothes, and a chance to tell yarns on the big, shady porch.

Bruce was telling them of the desperate fighting that the remnant of "Bowen's immortal division" saw at the last, under Joe Johnston, of the fierce crash at Franklin, where brave Pat Cleburn fell and gallant Cockrell charged through; then of the victory of Kenesaw Mountain, where the posted Confederates watched Sherman's army marching, in splendid, blue lines, right up to their concealed batteries, and how the handful mowed them down.

Dr. Hays interrupted him hotly. "It was a wicked thing to do. I have seen the pitiful side of this. The Confederacy was doomed; and the sacrifice of life in those last battles was cruel. Though few were killed, a hundred perhaps, it was a hundred homes made desolate for naught. A life very dear to me went down on the crest of Kenesaw Mountain, by a sharp-shooter, as the assault began. He was young, noble and brave, and a dozen mourning homes would have deemed the sacrifice bitter if his life had saved the cause. They had not been crushed in the fall, if he could have come back to them."



"It is war!" Bruce said. "It just seemed that Davis could not give up."

"Don't condemn tha last days, aal av ye!" Simon said. "An old German woman bewailed the loss of a son; a friend tried to console her with an appeal to her patriotism. She shook her head over the sock she was knitting.

"'No! It is all one tam pad business! Mine Jacob come from the old country to miss the army; an' we keer not for North or South or nigger. They make him go to the army an' kill him! Patriot! Tam!' and she pursed her mouth while she picked up a stitch in her knitting. Noo, that's the truth," he said gravely.

They all laughed at this; and Bruce asked him what he thought of their prospects under the government. "Will they keep faith with us, do you think?"

"Do ye mean will they give ye aa chance at business, and office-holding? If thot's it Aw think the Republicans will be like a grave-digger in an old Scotch story. In aa discussion of the resurrection, some one said, 'they could not be raised in their old bodies because there would not be bones enough to go round.' To this the old fellow said, 'that he didn't care, so there were bones enough for the Scots; it didn't matter whether there were enough for the English or not.' His smile was grimly significant. Then he went on seriously, "but we are aal

reet; we are soldiers of a great cause, instead of aa lot of land-pirates, and will abide the issue like men." }

"What will you do now, Landy?" Bruce asked, the pity he felt, in his voice.

"Aa wad hunt aa job, only naebody wants aa great wappin like maaself. And since the war Aam as restless as a young wamerel" (a spoiled child). Then after a pause, "Av coorse, Aa have rich kin on the other side."

Mrs. Terner's voice broke aptly into the silence that followed this.

"The's mighty little comfort in rich kin unless you are rich yourself."

Old Simon tried to look at her squarely, but shied away to masculine topics at once. "The trouble. Bruce, your Confederacy did not know av aa big hunk av it on this side of tha river (having aal they could see to on the other). I did na march so far, on account av the twikle to maa feet, but the fighting was sair and hot over here. Do ye mind aboot Mansfield, doctor? There was a doctor there" (he turned with a number of gigantic winks to the company) "who was told to carry an order across a plowed field. He thought his surgeon's scarf would protect him, and he was full av grit anyway. A whole regiment opened fire on him, and they fired aboot twelve times apiece. Tha pony needed nae spur or wandy; the dust flew like a whirlwind, and tha green scarf that stood oot straight was shot full

of holes." And Simon looked his pride in the doctor.

Dr. Hays said modestly that Simon was like Dr. Johnson in one way, as some one said of him, that when he was talking of fishes he made his minnows talk like whales.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

"When death, the great reconciler, has come, it is never our tenderness that we repent of, but our <sup>sympathy</sup> ~~sympathy~~." <sup>^^</sup>*George Eliot.*

It may have occurred to Margaret King that the returned Confederates were badly demoralized, and that she would like to see one come back "shaved, and in his right mind." Her hopes had centered in Frank, and now he was pale and stern, with haggard eyes, and long fierce whiskers that would disguise a bandit. "And he snarls when assailed," she said to her father, who was lying near her, content to watch her fingers weaving in tatting meshes.

"He is right," the Scout answered, "to snarl back for every blow. The world is a great wolf, anyway; it whines at the foot of a hill, around the man who is safe and secure above, without an attack, no matter how hostile that man may be; slinks away before his rich retainers; it lies in wait for the traveler, unarmed and defenseless, and tears him limb from limb if he gets the power; or howls in anger if the poor man escapes his clutches; it gives its stab in the dark, and watches greedily for the tired wayfarer who trips as he runs, and takes his heels when others come to the rescue: in fact," becoming more pleased with his metaphor.

"the world is like a pack of wolves that fawn together in plaudits to the successful, but turn their backs on merit 'unknown to fortune,' with a snarl.

"Frank was hurt to the death over our downfall. because he is a man of strong feelings; he did not come back with shoulder-straps, to appeal to this dear world—that is so like the wolf—though I know he could have started to the war as captain, and he could just as easily have come back with the honors of promotion. I have watched him everywhere; his bravery is wonderful, his manliness commanding. while his heart is fresh and true. I was interested in him at first, because I found him, a man outside of this same dear world, 'a gentleman in jeans,' I called the youth. Then I watched him for your sake; I had seen none to whom I could trust you, when I must go. Thus I amused myself in my hermit's life—which I should have continued, as I have so little faith in people—my dog, on the crag, was faithful."

Margaret took his thin hand and stroked his fingers. "Poor father! But you are talking too much." Then, "aren't you satisfied now—with—"

"With Bruce?" he answered cautiously. "I ought to be. The MacGregors have renewed my faith in humanity, and Bruce is true and manly. He will never set the Thames on fire, as the saying goes. but he will do something better, may be; he will be a gentleman; make a prosperous farmer, no doubt.

and he will be good to you. I am pleased that he does not look the least like that sneak of a Conners; if he was little, or catty, with the fine airs that pass in this 'same dear world of ours,' I would shoot him when he asked for your hand; it will be a brave thing to do, as it is."

"Do you know why I was so worked up when you told me of Conners? I must tell you this story sometime, and must not delay it longer.

"When you were ten years old I had reverses. through the failure of a bank. I had studied civil engineering, and a friend procured me a good place with a western railroad company. I had been in the far west five years when the company was rushing us to finish, and a young fellow was sent out to assist me; he was in my tent a good deal, and talked all the time of his home back east. One day he said, 'I lived in Cleveland a while; do you know the Kings. from there?' But he chattered on without any answer. 'There is a handsome woman there named King who is stirring up quite a social sensation. My sister said her husband was away somewhere, while a fellow by the name of Conners—he is French, I think—seemed to be madly in love with her, and such cutting up, for nice people, you never saw. He is rich, a widower with one son, and they laugh about this 'gay Lothario' taking his boy along to entertain the little King girl while he flirts with the mother. She is a beauty though; they say she was on the

stage at one time; we haven't been there long; had a little affair of my own, you know, and mother sent me west (this with impudent candor); but I have seen her; such eyes you never saw, with hair of bronze-gold.'

"I was lying down, and threw up my arm as if to sleep, while my tent-mate chatted on about something else. I shivered, as if with cold, while the hot blood burned my cheeks. This was how the people talked of my wife and daughter. How I had thought of them, and dreamed of them at my hard work. The boy was right; she was a beauty, and she had been on the stage. I never told you; I feared the early influences on her gay nature, and removed her from all associations with her past. She was an idol that filled my world; I thought I made her as happy: she was still young when the reverses came, and we planned to get ahead once more, through some mining property I owned in the west; I trusted her, even when the gossip boy was talking; but I resolved to go and see her, and hurried my preparations to go at once.

"At Cleveland I went first to a barber to have my rough beard removed; I had to wait for a customer. a handsome dandy, with some ill light in his face that I disliked. A friend of his came in.

"'Hello! Conners! Arming for conquest, I see. What do you do now, that you have sent the kid to school?' The other turned a little quick glance in my direction, but I was looking absently out of the win-

dow; then he answered languidly, 'She has sent the other kid to school, too,' and winked as he said it.

"I could see through the gloss that he was not a gentleman; could see him, a villain, shooting above his mark; yet the very kind of man who might be dangerous to a good woman, and would take advantage of a husband's absence. When satisfied that I looked more like the men I met on the streets, I went slowly home. It is an awful fear, that a man may have the least little cause to think his home may be a home no longer. Yet I went with my heart full of tenderness, reproaching myself for staying away from her so long. I stopped in front of the house to see Conners lying in a hammock, while my wife sat by reading. I could see her dainty neck, with bright, little curls clinging around it as the sunshine played over her head. She was reading aloud, her eyes on her book; his, absorbed and passionate, bent on her face. I could not meet her in the jealous anger that stirred me. I turned and walked till I found myself on the lake shore. I sat down and watched the cool water come in, lap over, and fall back, hoping the monotonous swish of the waves would calm me. I remember that it came to me there how my old nurse used to tell me, when I wanted to sleep or quiet my nerves, that I must shut my eyes and count sheep as they jumped over a ditch: and I would be asleep before the hundredth got over. It was pathetic, that in my flock there were one or



two, crippled or spent with the race, and my fear that they would not get over excited me to wakefulness: and now the waves only recalled me the restless grind of life. Ah! Life is never a grind, when a man has hope before him. I resolved to cling to this hope, and went home. I met Conners at the gate, and held it open for him with grave politeness. There was fear, recognition, or something unusual in his look, and he had the impudence to stop and gaze after me as I went to the door.

"Your mother fainted in my arms when we met. Though she seemed glad, she was plainly upset and nervous. It may have been my fault that the meeting was constrained. I said nothing to her, but I answered the door bell after dinner. I felt Conner's keen scrutiny as I read his card and said, 'If you wish to see my wife on urgent business, I will consult her; otherwise she is not at home to callers to-night.' He started violently, then seemed so amused he nearly laughed in my face; but he managed to bow and say, 'As Monsieur pleases.' How I kept from kicking him, I cannot tell.

"When I told my wife what I had heard, she was white and changed in a trice, and said coldly, 'You could not come till you heard this? You left me to five years' solitude, without a fear. Could you not trust me still?'

"I could not see the true woman, stung with suspicion, in her answer, in the miserable passion that

held me, and said to her, 'You had your child in your solitude. A right-minded woman would train her child in her father's absence, and not send her off to school to give society rouses a chance to talk to her or about her.'

"She was white as death, but replied coldly, 'If you think that of me, we need not talk further,' and she went to her room and staid there."

Margaret was weeping silently, and her father lay, white and still, a long time. Then he went on huskily, "I settled all the money I could spare from your education on her, then removed you to another school, telling no one where you were. I can see now what a wicked thing it was to do. Then I wandered back to the west, yet the old memories went ever with me; and Margaret, I did wrong! A man should fight a hasty temper as he would the vilest demon. I should have kicked that French dandy down the steps, and should then have listened to her, forgiving all and standing by her; it should be easy. when a man knows there could not be much to forgive. How blindly I heaped remorse for the hardest days of my life, the days when we must look back on the past. I found it unendurable as the years went on, and made up my mind to go to her and ask her to forgive my cruel doubts."

"Oh! Father, if you had. My mother spent her time searching for me all those years; then she saw my name among the list of graduates at Madame

G.'s, and she came and carried me home. She was very frail, and the excitement proved too much for her; she died of heart trouble a few months later, when I had just heard from you, in Missouri."

"It was a fatal coincidence," the Scout continued. "that when I had started, I heard in Springfield of the intense excitement over the war, and met a recruiting officer who begged me to carry a message to General Price. It looked like destiny that my aimless life should be thrown in the mad vortex that carried us on. I have seen all the armies and knew the people from the Missouri to the Gulf. They are great-hearted and just. Though a Northern man, I felt their oppression and their wrongs. I saw, two years ago, how it must end, but the news you brought me decided me to stay with them to the bitter end. There is something wrong here," putting his hand to his neck; "I may live for months or years, but my mind will fail me, and I wanted to have this talk with you before—"

"Dear father, you are tired and excited now; you have talked too long. But I must tell you that my mother gave me a package to give to you if you should ever feel that you had wronged her. Then," with hesitation, "there did not seem to be any time—you never told me, in the rush of the war—"

"Give it to me before it is too late!"

"But you are so tired now, father, and ought to rest."

"My brain is on fire; how can I rest? Give me the package!" He untied it eagerly; a few old letters, tied with black ribbon, and one written four years before. Margaret left him with his letter. When she went back, she found him greatly excited, his eyes wild and strange.

"Oh, Margaret! Your mother was innocent! Your mother was true! Though persecuted by a villain; and I, who should have been there to protect her, was far away, and doubting her! God forgive me! He will! He must! The past is gone! There is no future! God is the present! God is here to see this restitution! It is just! For why should I linger, whose life leadeth nowhere?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Mrs. Turner went in to see him and sent at once for the MacGregor, who summoned Bruce and Frank. The Scout had a paroxysm of pain, caused by the wound in his neck; the restriction brought on paralysis, which proved fatal.

Afterwards he was quieter and recognized his friends. "Do you remember," he said to the MacGregor, "you told me once the Highlanders removed their dying to the open air, where they could listen to the waves or to running water?"

They lifted his couch, in answer, and carried it to the shade of a monster oak. "This is better," he

said, and he seemed to listen to a robin singing close by, his red breast glancing in the sun as he swung to and fro.

"How small the world is! It is narrowed to the friends around my couch! Did you ever think of that as the size of the world to all—at last?" Then his voice rang out strong and full. "Ah! Price is a good man! He appreciated my work! One of his officers said he could not see as far as an eagle, but his grip was that of the lion. I tell you he could see! And he knew when he lost through the mistakes of others. He made one great mistake; but the Confederacy was made of mistakes! I saw his face at Pea Ridge through the smoke of the battle, flaming with his first sense of defeat, but it was the face of a hero!"

His hands dropped and his eyelids quivered; then he said softly, "There is a shadow falling, but—we must—know no fear. I—will—be back—at—Reveille!!"

No need of signal to the next post. The nobility of death was set on his calm face with the Great Seal.

The robin had hushed his song! A strange life had gone out in the sunshine, 'mid the silence of the Nature he had loved.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

"An' don't do regular courtin', an' don't hang roun' an' ha'nt  
her,  
An' don't say any words of love, however much you want her."  
—*Yankee Blade.*

In one of Doudan's beautiful letters, he says, "On the heights, we see the sources of great ideas and noble emotions." There was something akin to this in the minds of the young people who had known and loved the scout, as they stood on the high crest of the hill by the castle, a few months after the scout's death, and looked out over the pictures that met his gaze on the lonely days.

Below the tiny house, the creek rushed through the gorge, as it did after heavy rains, then spread out for its placid way across the green valley, its banks resplendent now, with the red and gold of autumn foliage; away off in the distance, it wound a thread of light, around the base of the long hill on which the "Sage of the Ozarks" passed another lonely life.

The Hermit's world, peopled with his books, was retrospective too. Each, the high-born and the lowly, had caught the vigor of the "wild infancy" round them; for the rest, what did it matter? The arabesques on the face of the high bluffs were unread

by either. One found content to the measure of his life, the other was softened to atonement.

When half-way up the hill, Faith asked Frank if they might live in the hope of reaching the top.

He answered slowly, "It is like everything else one wants to do, around and around, and a long climb: one can only try."

Bruce pulled himself heavily from the ground, and began,—*"In the bright lexicon of youth——"* Frank caught each girl by an arm, and darted around the hill out of sight. "I can climb this bluff, but I'll be hanged if I listen to Bruce as Richelieu, at the same time."

Margaret pulled away from him, ran back, peered through the bushes at Bruce, and smiled as he calmly finished his quotation to the trees.

Frank waited for them at a turn in the path. "I will have to be guide, you know."

"But I have been here before," Margaret said to him. The young men looked their surprise, and Faith said despairingly, "I never knew a calm girl take people by surprise as Margaret can. How could you come here?"

"It was just as the war was beginning. I thought I would surprise papa in his castle, and came alone to Springfield, supposing Finley Creek was in its suburbs. My impressions were sanguine of your state; I had only to traverse picturesque roads, with hospitable cottages by the wayside, and gallant cavaliers

ever ready to direct me; relying, of course, on my black dress and staid manner to assist me. I jolted along from Springfield in a forlorn wagon, with an old man who had sternly planted his standard of rectitude, as far as manner could go; he said never a word but 'haw' or 'whoa!' If you could picture my dismay on reaching the village! A few huts in the valley, sadder and grayer for a drizzling rain that seemed to blow from the hills. I waited in the post-office, while curious looking men sat about in awkward silence; one ventured to say, 'This'll raise the crik.' I looked out at the 'crik,' already rushing like a torrent down the valley, while they watched me furtively. Far across, on the other side, I saw a woman in her doorway, and I wanted so much to get close to that 'check-cotton' dress."

Margaret paused a moment, "I have seen cotton dresses since then that covered hearts warm and true, but I will return to my knights at the postoffice; it was one corner of a grocery store; by the way. Though they must have been consumed with curiosity, they never asked a question, and the dozen pairs of eyes were making me desperate. I tucked my dress and started without a word to them, when the rain slacked to a drizzle. I met a queer fellow shambling along, and thinking I would like to see how he talked, asked him to show me where Mr. King lived.

"The hummit?" he inquired, after looking me over.



"I believe it is on a mountain crag," I added, "and a lonely place."

"Hit's on a bluff on Finley Crik," and grinned at his superior way of putting it. "Yes, hit's War'n! I know him."

"Then show me the way," I said. I gave him some money and his grin deepened to an assurance of solid comradeship."

"It was Jonce Limber," Frank interrupted.

"Yes." She laughed at the recollection. "We were a stunning couple, if any had been there to see; he wobbled from side to side of the steep path, knocking the wet bushes as he passed; I trudged behind him, with soaking feet, and skirts held high; to add to my discomfiture, the path was much too narrow for my hoops, and they knocked from side to side, too. We toiled to the top to find no one at home but a great, black dog whom I trusted at once; I had to; he seemed happy, yet puzzled, and I do believe I reminded him of papa."

"What did you do?" Faith asked in wonder.

"I staid a few days, explored the neighborhood around the castle in company with the dog, and when I had seen all the cunning little brooks and waterfalls in the valley, I went back to Springfield." She seemed to resent the surprised attention of her listeners, and added, "I was not half so afraid of the great, green hills as of the queer people in the valley."

"You are a remarkable young woman, Margaret, and worthy of being the Scout's daughter. Alone on this eery place, roaming around with a dog in search of water-falls!"

"But you see, I was charged with a great lot of sentiment to expend on your people; what could I do with it?"

"What did you do with it?" asked Frank, meaningly. Then, with up-raised finger, "Stop, don't look at Bruce; I'd as soon joke with a sea-lion. But seriously, I can tell you what you did while up on this bluff; you scared Luke Patton's wife nearly to death and started a ghost story that would have proven demoralizing to the country, only for the time of its coming. We had to 'shoulder arms' to fight the real ghosts from the North, and the excitement laid the one on the bluff. Mrs. Patton said 'something tall and white stood on the bluff and then vanished suddenly.' As no woman had ever been seen up here the mystery deepened into a ghost story. I think you owe it to Mrs. Patton to go and relieve her of the tension of the last four years over that ghost."

"I am glad," Faith spoke with spirit, "to hear you give her a name. I have heard her spoken of as 'Luke Patton's wife'; as if a woman had no right to an existence or even a name, except that hoisted over her by some man. Even such a little ——"

"He has been called a pine-burr," Frank suggested, "if I can help you to call people names."

"Margaret looked at him severely. "What has come over you? St. John retires from the combat as soon as you show your teeth of late. If you ——"

"Yes, Frank interrupted, evenly, he tries to pass it off as if I were scarcely worth his while; I think it will have to be settled yet in mortal combat; his shilly-shallying would serve him to little purpose then."

"You boast behind his back," Faith said severely, "and there is nothing to grin over, only that you are proud of your teeth."

\* \* \* \* \*

They went into the desolate little house; everything of value had been carried away. A number of magazines were scattered about.

"Ah!" Frank exclaimed, "these brought to us the world outside. How I reveled in his books! We had the 'Atlantic,' 'Harper,' 'The Eclectic,' and the 'Southern Messenger' when Jno. R. Thompson's pen, tipped with fire, opened wide the doors of life to those who believed." He noticed a strongly marked passage, "It is Thoreau—on men—" then he read, "They do a little business to pay their board, then congregate in sitting-rooms and fabulate and paddle in the social slush,—and then steal away, unashamed to their beds."

"Strong! Is it not? The Scout could scorn all this, because he was proud and disdained his own comfort. It is strange about men," Frank went on

reflectively, "now I would not stand smilingly beneath a crown of roses if one thorn hurt my head. He went bravely where few could applaud, as the priests of old put on sack-cloth. There was no peace to the flesh for either, and no plaudits of men at the end. Yet we were proud of him, though only a lot of poor Rebels; and Gen. Price said he was the best scout in the Southern army."

Margaret's sad face brightened at his words of praise. "You are such a good friend. It was nice for papa when he had lost so much."

"Yes, when he first came it seemed that he had thrown everything to the high winds that whistled by this lonely crag. I wish I had known of the fairer part of his life."

"Why?" Margaret's voice faltered.

"I should have understood him better." Then with great show of strength, he said, fiercely, "I would not let a woman make a wreck of my life so. I would stick to her, or throw her off, one or the other."

Margaret was silent. Faith looked at him coolly. "I believe you would." There were no dimples about her handsome mouth, Frank observed, as he turned to go with Bruce, roaming quietly about the rooms.

Frank stopped in the doorway. "It is a mystery how he escaped capture. The Federals found the path up here, and raided the place time and again. John Limber brought them up once, but the Scout

had vanished. Hello! What is this?" He was down on his knees peering into a hole he had uncovered. Frank and Bruce went in with matches and found a passage to a long cave that led to the other side of the hill. Here the Scout had lain concealed while the soldiers cursed over the heavy rewards they missed for not bringing in the noted spy. Here he had mapped his routes and made his plans for the secret and perilous journeys in advance of his command.

He died, as thousands died in the cruel strife, and in dying, his thoughts were still—

“Of liberty born of patriot’s dream,  
Of the storm-cradled nation that fell.”

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Her heart rose and burst the light cage she had fashioned  
Out of glittering trifles around it."

—*Owen Meredith.*

Frank came out of the cave with a wig and long, fierce whiskers on, and bowed stiffly.

"Why, Frank, you look like a Russian!" Margaret exclaimed.

"That's awfully nice of you." He said, "When I want so much to go to Russia. I would like to be there, train my beard to grow long and heavy, and wear a handsome fur overcoat and cap; I would like to live in their homes, bright with color and eat everything peppery and highly spiced; I would like to dash over the wild steppes in a sleigh and chase wolves and wild game of all sorts——" He stopped, highly amused at the crowding fancies.

"You would make a handsome Russian," Margaret said seriously, "but the men there are handsome and good natured, and——"

"Yes," Frank added, "but they take life easy, and the women stir up their wicked little plots to entertain them; though Russia does not stand out distinct from the world, just for that."

"What nonsense," Faith interrupted them curtly.

"We have this long, beautiful day before us; let us enjoy it before anybody starts for Russia."

"What will you do with the castle, Margaret?" Bruce asked.

"We will come every summer and spend a month or two," she said, quite bravely.

The other couple, wandering away, pretended not to hear.

Faith began to gather the glowing autumn berries, leaves of vivid yellow and winter grasses. "We can't ignore the gray things," she said, "only a little while and the bright spots will fade, the birds will be still and gray skies will lower, but see, I am going to have a trophy of the day."

She held up her hands full of the bright colors, over which Frank glanced indifferently. Then she added, "You are severe today. Will nothing content you this side—of Russia?"

"That depends," tentatively. "I am demoralized with quiet and useless dreaming; there is so much to do I do not know where to take hold first."

"You must be, not to take pleasure in this hill-side." She sat down on the mossy root of a great oak and began to assort her collection.

"The hill is crowned today," he spoke slowly, "but one cannot live on beauty; that squirrel up there, peeping at us in astonishment, has the good sense to know that winter is coming, and is storing his tree with food."

Faith shaped the foundation for a crown. "Frank, as a pessimist, is a different Frank from the one we used to know."

"One can't caper about like a half-grown boy, all the time."

"A man need not be either a stick or a jumping-jack."

"I had to caper in the old days," Frank added, a trifle sulkily, "to keep off your feet and from under St. John's."

Faith held her head to one side as she studied a cluster of "bitter-sweet" berries. "St. John will not trouble to get out of your way; yet he is subdued too, though maybe a little thankful."

"He might be," Frank spoke warmly, "he never lost his whole world with the Confederacy; he never lost a dear friend, and he has gained much."

He watched her white fingers at their work, noting bitterly that she said nothing to this. Then she asked calmly, "What will you do?"

"Go to work to make a living."

"A living?"

"Certainly! I have to build fences even before I can farm."

"And you will settle down to that?"

Frank imagined her look full of the old pride; he was carried back to that first night at the MacGregor's, when he had been so impressed with the large personality of his host, with Helen's slow grace and



slumbering eyes, and Faith's blue ones that had changed his life—in an hour. He had thought since, the hard years had melted her, somehow, into a sweet graciousness that added to her charms. Her eyes now, as she sat there with her head tilted back, had steely glints that belonged to the fearless eyes of the family before they had bent to the sorrow of Archie's death.

Frank was a long time answering her question.

"What else can I do? I had intended to study law; how in the name of fate can I now?"

"Don't swear at me and I will tell you. There are numbers of Confederate soldiers who have nothing; not even ground to work. Employ one or two men; let them build up the farm for next year's crop, give them half, and see what good work you will get."

Frank threw himself on the grass in a dull despair. "Who is to feed them? Or am I supposed to run away to get out of the worst of the problem?"

"They will have to feed themselves." Practically. "You will study law with Judge R. and in two years make the living which oppresses you so. I never saw a young man so weighted with that responsibility. Every soldier who has missed the fires of sacrifice should consecrate his life to the best. A practical life has its profit. Work is good for us, though of course we do not talk of it yet, that way. I speak of my 'establishment' not in pride, but to uphold Dilsie and Monk in their pride."

"Meantime?" Frank was dazed at her summary disposal of all things.

"Meantime you can wear old clothes and profit by many things you have learned during the war, during the two years."

"Two y-e-a-r-s!" Frank whistled dolefully. Then counted on his fingers: "Twice 5 are 10 and 1 to carry; twice 6 are 12 and 1 is 13; twice 3 are 6, and 1 is 7,730 days! And each day will be 48 hours long. Great Scott!"

She looked at him doubtfully. "Two years are nothing! I wish I were a man, to have the chance to grapple with the kind of difficulties that men have to meet."

The crown had dropped, the scarlet berries glowing against her black dress. "I think you go at a gordon knot with a hatchet, as it is," he said, grimly. Then slowly: "Two years! I had other work for the two years a-coming." He looked squarely into her eyes at the head of a faction, or village clique. You have  
X "Of course! There is nothing so calculated to make a man opinionated as to live as you have lived, led others all your life, and can't see how you will dis-eyes at this, but they were steady and cool. like to follow when you have settled down to—rail-splitting."

"You put it plainly." His color rose at her persistent gravity.

She picked up a handful of spotted leaves and tried the effect.

"Will you please get me a few thorns from the little tree there? The one with the fiery top."

"I have no knife. Luke Patton has not been able to buy one this summer and we use mine in partnership."

"Just pull off a few; it is not very hard, only they scratch my hands so."

Frank went slowly to the Hawthorn, plunged his hand into the bristling bush, raked it fore and aft with the sharp thorns, and spoke two little words with emphasis while he twisted the unlucky member out; he went around the tree, faced about and peered through the leaves to see if she was watching. Anger seized him when he saw that she was trying on the crown, making little pats at her fluffy hair with the aid of a mirror the size of a dollar as she moved the bright thing on her head this way or that. If he had not been so dead in earnest he might have suspected she was acting. When she grew tired of the glass she looked away down the valley.

Frank watched her through the leafy screen. "What splendid eyes," he thought, yet he saw that their laughing brightness was softened. Was it the shadow of the years just agone, or was she penitent just now for the way she had treated him. He had laid out a masterly campaign for this day on the cliffs, and every thing was topsy turvy. He had taken his courage in hand, resolved to leap the last year; he was tired of

indecision; and here she was planning his work judicially, "and calling him a rail-splitter!"

If he could have followed her thoughts as she look at the restless ribbon of water shimmering in the green valley.

"And is this all the war has left to me?" She crushed back the tears at recollections of what she had left of the brother she had idolized: A piece of stained, gray coat, with two bullet-holes through the breast, and a curl of golden hair, that Dr. Hays had sent her. . . . She had nothing, she reflected, of the friend whom Archie had loved; he had come back soured and war-broken, she had thought; it flashed over her that it was just as if he had left his heart behind; perhaps he had. That recalled her and she looked around as if she had just found somebody.

"What on earth are you doing? Oh! I had forgotten."

She looked scornfully at three or four ragged thorns which he offered rather defiantly.

"You can get more, though," with the air of conferring a favor. "I have a long time to finish it in."

"It is short," thought Frank, "for the work before me." Resolve had clutched him—at the thorn-bush. He threw himself down on the grass beside her. "Have you anything else in special, that you hold against me beside farming and rail-splitting?"

"I like farmers," as if they were to be viewed collectively.

"But your hands—" She looked down at his hands. Frank moved his hand unconsciously; she saw the bleeding scratches, bound her handkerchief around it with a business air, as if she could not be interrupted with trifles.

Frank let his hand fall limply from the wrist as she turned it about, and he smiled to think she must feel as if she was tying up a frog's foot. Yet his arm thrilled at her touch and his heart pounded so violently, he moved in the sudden fear that she would hear. He rested his head on one arm, looking at the flaming trees on the other side of the valley.

"And so, I'm to read law, money or no money! Well! I must find a way! Curious how it comes over a man to submit; he learns to 'tack' when young, and might as well go. But—" he jerked himself up from the grass, "My God! How black the world that has fallen around us! What is a poor Confederate soldier to do? At the beginning of the war I laughed at this same world; at the idea of its having anything too good for me! I wanted the best to lay at a woman's feet! She is still on a pedestal, and I—do not dare to throw myself there, with wounds, poverty and the cold shoulder of the world that I had hoped to face."

He fell back to his old position, his head on his up-raised arm.

Faith sat quite still a long time. Then she gave the finishing touches to the crown, which had grown into a beautiful thing of gray and gold and crimson;

she reached over and placed it on his head, saying as she arranged some curls to suit her, "What a splendid Viking! I wonder if your Norse ancestors had green eyes and raven hair? I wonder how you would have righted your wrongs, if you had been Odin's savage son? No! It's the head of a Greek god! You are like Antinous!"

"Oh Faith! I have thought of him so often. He gave his life for his best beloved—"

"While you will give yours—" she paused, the rich color creeping over her face at his steady gaze as he raised up, then went on. "The crown raises you above the pedestal. Don't you see?"

His face had changed, as with a flash of light.

"Oh, Faith! Will you wait for me for those two years?"

"No! I will not! I will not trust any one who veers around with every breath of misfortune."

His head went back to his arm. It was bitter to rise to the mount of a moment before, to what he had seen in her face, and then fall back.

"Can I come to see you while—I study law?"

"No!"

"Can I write to you?" With humility heavy enough to be satirical.

"No!"

"You leave me among the ruins. If I fail it will only be 'one more Confederate.'" After a pause: "I watched you one day, put something in a bag against

the wall, with that charming grace that young ladies assume, and which some wives forget; I looked in the bag and found a ball of twine, a piece of tape and a nail. I was tempted to ask you to put me among your treasures, as a vent to the foolishness needed sometimes to humanize an idol. . . . It was so easy to love you through the distractions of war, so hard to come back to face St. John with 'his advantages,' only for one little hope that I might find the 'advantages' in your love. Then—you can't trust me?"

"No. Not alone!" Her scarlet lips closed firmly.

"How?" He caught at her meaning, then faltered.

"I will have to go with you, to keep up your courage. There is to be no more backing down in this."

"Oh! My Faith! The world is mine again! And Heaven!"

"It took you a long time to find its light. A blind man could have seen it. I never had such a time drawing a man on." Then, demurely, "Will you please let go of my hand? Bruce and Margaret are peeping from behind that big tree, and don't know whether to call us or not."

"No matter," he said, cheerily, "when two people are made for each other their road is smoothed, in time—"

"How brave!" Faith interrupted with a laugh. "When so full of doubt a moment ago."

Frank placed the crown on her head, as he bent to

kiss the bright face dimpling beneath it; it was splendid on her golden curls.

They started up the long hill. No matter for the climb before them, or the rough places they had crossed; their happiness on that day comes only once.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Who knows whither the clouds have fled?  
In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake,  
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,  
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;  
The soul partakes the season's youth,  
And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe  
Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,  
Like burnt-out craters healed with snow."



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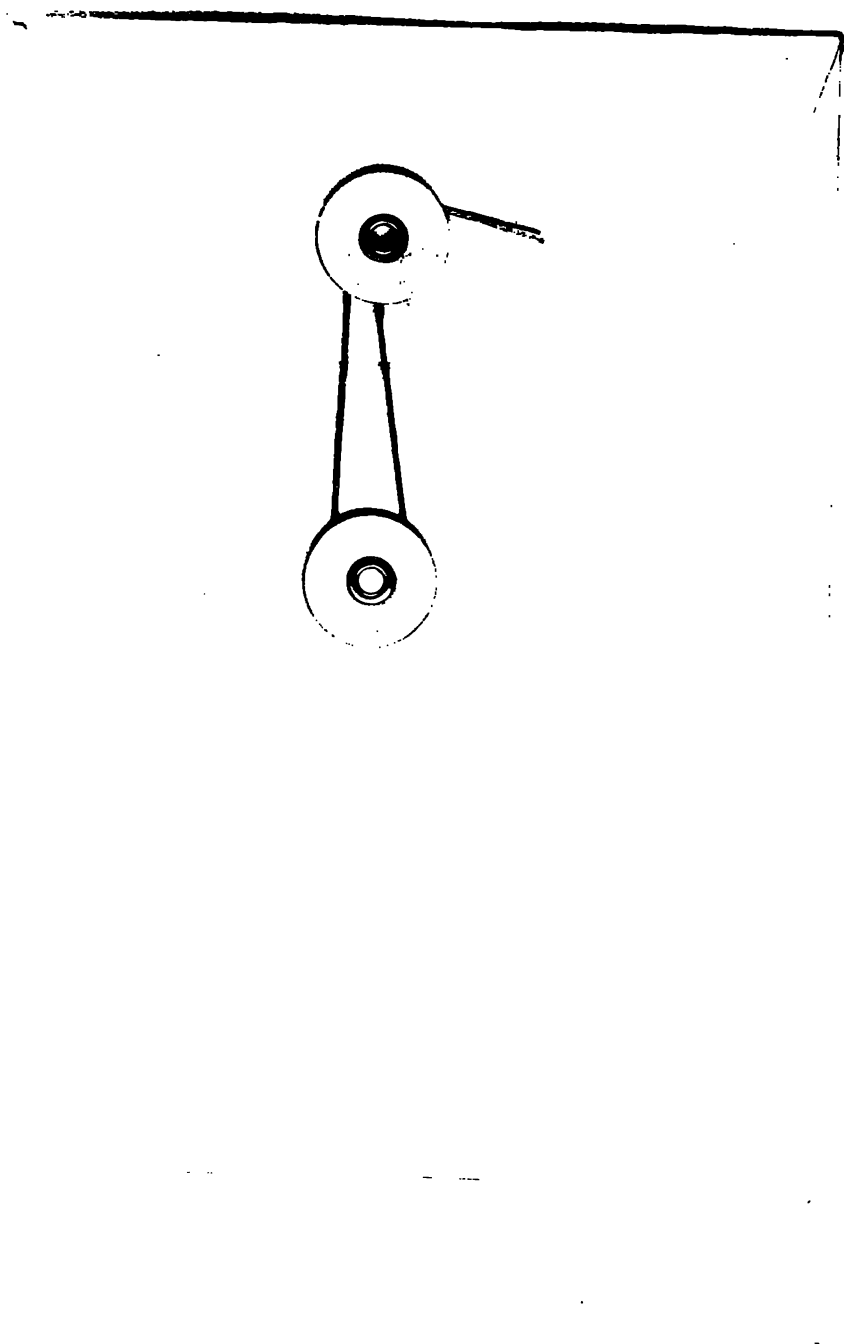
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This envelope contains  
a letter to

Mr Andrew Carnegie  
from

Mrs Virginia Yates McConne





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